



The Historiographer

of the Episcopal Diocese of Connecticut

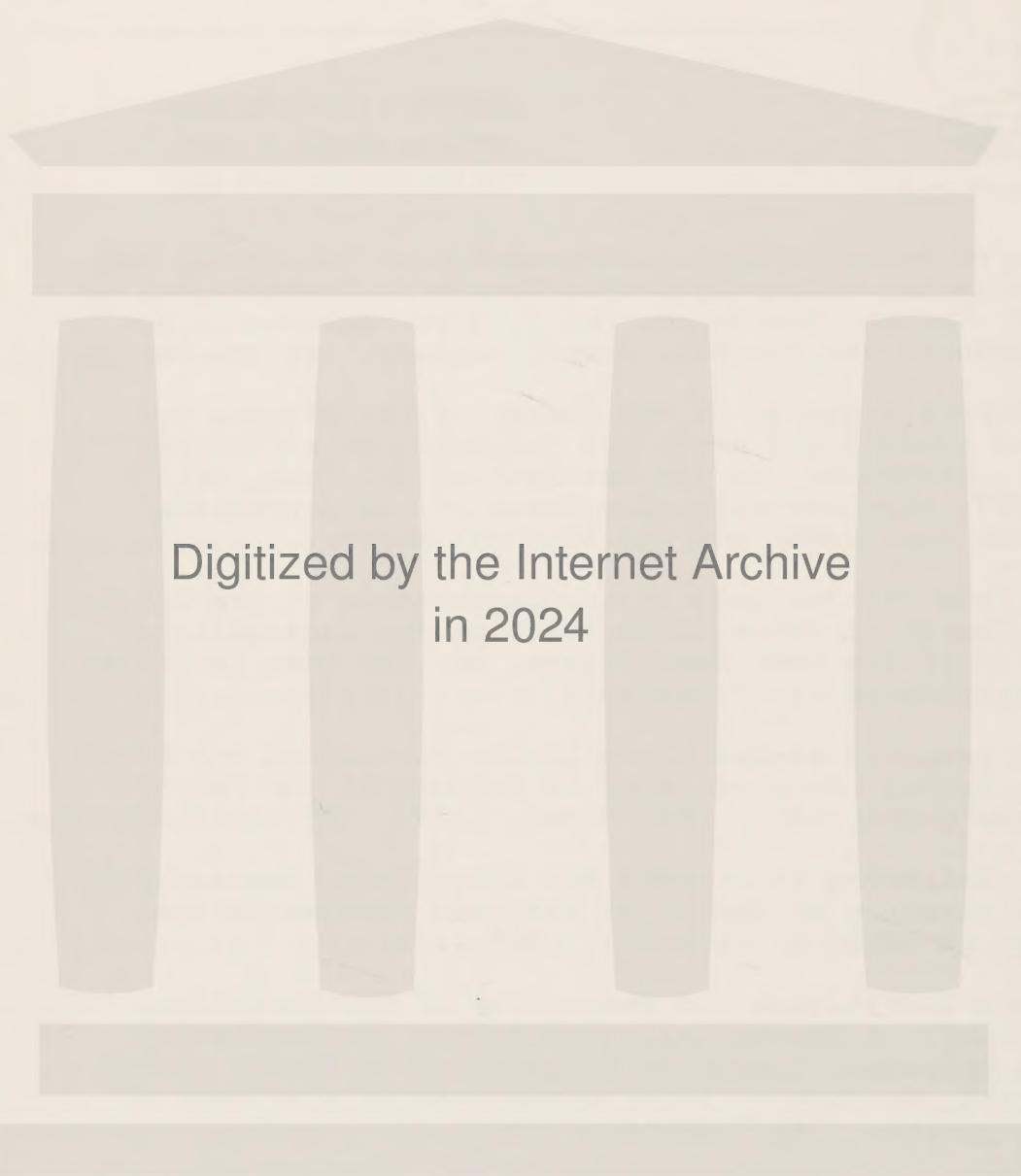
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December
1975

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A
DISCOURSE
DELIVERED BEFORE
A SPECIAL CONVENTION
OF
THE CLERGY,
AND
LAY DELEGATES,
OF THE
EPISCOPAL CHURCH
IN THE
STATE OF CONNECTICUT,
IN
TRINITY CHURCH, NEW-HAVEN

ON THE FIFTH DAY OF MAY,
ONE THOUSAND SEVEN HUNDRED AND NINETY-SIX
OCCASIONED BY THE DEATH OF THE
RIGHT REVEREND SAMUEL SEABURY, D.D.
BISHOP OF CONNECTICUT AND RHODE-ISLAND.

By ABRAHAM JARVIS, A.M.
PRESBYTER, AND RECTOR OF CHRIST'S CHURCH IN MIDDLETOWN.

NEW-HAVEN—Printed by T. & S. GREEN.

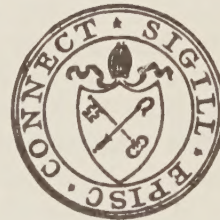


*At a Convention of the Clergy and Laity of
the Protestant Episcopal Church in Connecti-
cut, holden at New-Haven the 5th Day of
May, 1796:*

RESOLVED, That Rev. ASHBEL BALDWIN, Rev. PHILO SHELTON, and ELI CURTISS, Esq. be a Committee to return the Thanks of the Convention to the Rev. Mr. JARVIS, for his Discourse delivered before the Convention this Day in Trinity Church; and request a Copy for the Press.

Signed by Order of Convention,

PHILO PERRY, Secr'y.



TO THE CLERGY, HIS ESTEEMED AND
SINCERELY RESPECTED BRETHREN;
AND TO THE LAY MEMBERS OF THE CON-
VENTION.

THIS DISCOURSE IS RESPECTFULLY IN-
SCRIBED,

BY THEIR AFFECTIONATE BROTHER
AND HUMBLE SERVANT,

ABRAHAM JARVIS.

HEBREWS 13 ch. 7 v.

Remember them who have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God : whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation.

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**W**HEN the Gospel was first published to the world, the Jews who embraced the faith, were, above all other Christians, hated and persecuted by their unbelieving brethren. As their discouragements were more severe, and their temptations stronger, to renounce that holy religion, to which they had been so lately converted ; they stood in need of greater aids to enable them to persevere, and to keep them steadfast in their holy profession to the end.

To these Hebrew converts, the Apostle sends this epistle, wherein *he expounds unto them, in all the scriptures, the things concerning Christ ; his character and offices ; what he should do and suffer, as foretold by Moses and the Prophets.* The ministry of Moses was representative and prophetic, the law given by him was preparative, to endure but for a time, until, according to the wisdom and good providence of God, every thing should be prepared for

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for the coming of Christ, by whom, the religion he taught would be fulfilled and completed ; who was to put an end to that law, and give a new one, which ever after should be the rule for his church, and in him, the spirit of life and salvation unto men. Moses, truly was faithful in all things unto which he was appointed, but he was a servant only in that house, of which Christ was the master and builder. Similar to Moses and the law, was Aaron, and the priesthood annexed to it ; temporary, and figurative of the priesthood of Christ, which should be unchangeable and eternal, through which, not the Jews only, but all nations were to partake, in the sovereign mercies of their almighty Creator. From thence he argues Christ's power and readiness, to succour and protect them in all their adversities, and to relieve them in all their necessities. And to confirm them further in the faith of the gospel, against every Jewish pretention, he represents the great sin and hazard of apostacy ; neither could they expect any benefit from their past labours and sufferings, without perseverance. He therefore exhorts them to constancy and patience in their faith, by the examples of former saints, and also by those of their own time, whose faith and lives were well known to them ; who had kissed the cross with joy, as it was a sure passport to the embraces of their glorified Redeemer. Remember them who have had the rule over you ; who have stood firm under the severest trials, and faithfully spoke the word of

of God ; whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation.

The full purport of which words are expressed in the following paraphrase : “ Set before your eyes the bishops and governors that have been in your church, and preached the gospel to you ; observe their manner of living, and their perseverance till death ; and make their faith, their perseverance, and constancy in the doctrine of the gospel, the example for you to imitate and transcribe.”\*

Although we are to set before us, in every instance of duty, the perfect and divine pattern of Jesus Christ, who suffered for us, leaving us an example, that we should follow his steps ; yet we see it is <sup>not</sup> unauthorised to propose human, and imperfect characters, for our imitation. The history of men in every age affords ample testimony, how much they are influenced and led by the authority and power of example. Among the multitude, small is the number of those men, who are able to mark out to themselves a rule in every part of their conduct. It requires more leisure, and greater capacity, than most men either can or are willing to make use of for that purpose. To their wise men and industrious guides, the bulk of mankind are greatly indebted, for their labours, in teaching them the knowledge of salvation, and guiding their feet in the way of peace. The respect paid to such labourers in word and doctrine, is no inconsiderable evidence, to what degree religion





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honor actuated the minds of men, in the early days of christianity. Their pure faith and pious zeal, we have thus expressed : " We adore the Son of God, but the martyrs, we deservedly esteem for the love which they have borne to their King and Master ; and desire to be their disciples and companions." That they might cherish the remembrance of their piety, and perpetuate the influence of their virtues, it soon became customary, to solemnize their memory upon the day of their death, which they considered as their birth-day to a life of happiness and immortality. Thus whilst God was honoured and glorified in his saints, who had enabled them to endure, and then rewarded them for their perseverance ; the body of believers was encouraged and excited to follow their examples with firmness and constancy.

That which distinguishes a Christian, from a Jew or a Heathen, is his faith, his knowledge of Christ and the Gospel. By his faith, as it comprehends all the great motives of action, the Christian professes to live, that is, to have all his aims, desires, and actions, governed by what God has revealed. On that foundation he builds his hopes of happiness, derived from the divine promises.

In the eleventh chapter of this epistle, the apostle illustrates, with a beautiful variety of expression, the sovereign efficacy of that divine principle, in the actions and sufferings of the old patriarchs, who lived in the different ages of

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of the world, before the coming of Christ ; and shews how they overcame all difficulties and temptations, and proved themselves superior to all the snares and corruptions of the world, by the support of that steadfast faith and trust in God, to which all Christians are called.

In the beginning of the twelfth chapter, he applies the account he had given in the foregoing : that since Christians are called to the same faith, which actuated those eminent saints, and thereby were incompassed with such a cloud of witnesses, bearing testimony to its great power and efficacy, all might thence have the fullest assurance, of what they themselves might be able to accomplish. As a finishing support and encouragement in all the duties of their holy religion ; and to complete the argument drawn from example ; they should fix their minds invariably upon the holy Jesus, the author and finisher of their faith ; who for the joy that was set before him, as man, endured the pain and despised the shame of the cross, for which as a due reward, that nature is exalted to the highest dignity and glory, at the right hand of the Majesty on high.

Had no other pattern of holy living and dying been prescribed to us, but that of our divine Saviour, the infinite disproportion might have been discouraging ; and the perfection of it, might have lessened the force of the example. Absolute wisdom and goodness, therefore, hath not only given for our use, a model of human

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virtue in perfection, that by looking at what is perfect, we might be perpetually growing in grace, until at last, in a future state, we should arrive unto the perfect man, the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ : He hath moreover left on record, for our instruction, instances of men, having no higher privileges than ourselves, and given to them the testimony that they were approved of by him.

In such instances, raised up by the good providence of God, we are led to behold the faith and grace of the gospel, formed in visible image, to which it is highly proper to pay a well directed attention. For certainly, we cannot conceive of a method more effectual, to impress on the minds of Christians, the doctrines of the gospel, than to lay before them particular samples, of what that faith hath been able to effect, under which they profess to act. In this way, men are taught by their eyes, and all their senses ; and are left without excuse. So that it must be the personal fault of every particular Christian, if his faith does not produce, under equal circumstances, the like degrees of virtue and holiness, to which others have attained under its influence.

Let it be noticed then, that the man, who confidently asserts, that he was not a whit behind the chief of the apostles ; and who calls upon his brethren, to mark well, and to be followers of him, as he was of his holy and crucified Master : this first of saints, that he might





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might minister strength and resolution to the faith of Christians, of that day,—and the same stands to awaken, and to quicken ours;—advise—To remember them who have spoken the word of God; and to follow their faith, considering the end of their conversation.—That being compassed with so great a cloud of witnesses—to lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us—and to run with patience the race that is set before us.—“Here—in alluding, (to use the words of the elegant “and pious bishop Horn) to that prodigious “assembly from all parts of the earth, convened “at Olympia, to be spectators of the games; “before whom the candidates contended, having in view those venerable personages from “whose hands they were to receive the palm, “and who were immediate witnesses of their “respective conduct and merit.—Alluding to “these circumstances, St. Paul places the “Christian combatant in the midst of a most “august and magnificent theatre, filled with “all the great and illustrious characters, enumerated in the preceding chapter, as having “overcome through the power of faith, from “the beginning of the world: whose presence “should animate and fire him to engage in the “contest, with an ambition not to be reprehended, and a spirit altogether invincible.”

These ideas, which this beautiful and descriptive allusion excites, prepare us to taste, and feel, the full force and energy of every expression in the passage. It is an argument that can never change,

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change, or lose its force. That assembly has been enlarging as the church on earth, has, from the days of the apostles down to the present, been constantly sending forth from her bosom, many worthy sons and daughters to add to its number. The Christian combatant of this day, may consider himself as acting upon the same theatre, in the view and observation of the same venerable personages, with the idea swelled, and still more enlarged upon his mind. Happy would be the effects, was the idea cherished in its full magnitude and force. But the argument takes another turn, and stands in a different light, when applied to those characters, while they were in the flesh, exemplifying the power of faith in the Christian warfare. Here we are to consider them as leading the way, and shewing us how mighty is the principle of that religion, to which we, by the good providence of God, are called, to carry us through all temptations, and to keep us steadfast under all trials. In the other state, we are to view them in the full possession of that bliss, to which they were advanced, at the end of their earthly conversation, when their day of labour closed, and this world vanished from their mortal sight; and there contemplate them, as witnesses to us of the unspeakable glories we shall inherit, if we continue to strive and persevere as they did, in the days of their flesh.

Men who lived in former times, we can only remember, by reading their transactions, and commemorating their faith and virtues. By con-

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contemplating their examples, given in the faithful records of their lives, each one may become his own instructor, and learn a lesson of more value, than all the treasures of the world. How should the lustre of their virtues encourage us to well-doing, and quicken us to an holy emulation? How will they reproach us for our faults, and upbraid our dulness and defects? Let experience be consulted, what we see in others, and feel in ourselves, and this reflection will lead us to see the wisdom and duty of caution, in the choice of our more intimate companions and associates, to whose observation we lay ourselves the more open, as they to ours: and whose pious examples may be to us, a constant and living instruction. It will also direct us, frequently to call up, and contemplate the examples of those, who are deceased; who thereby continue, though dead, to speak and preach to us, what are that faith and life, which are fruits of the spirit, and in the end will carry us to the realm of bliss.

The saints of God at all times inculcate one and the same general lesson. Living by the faith of the Son of God, their holy tempers and purity of manners, deservedly enroll them among the righteous, who shall be held in remembrance, and their patterns in like manner encourage, and engage us, in the uniform practice of virtue and religion.

It is then a tribute, proportionately due to persons of our own age, who are eminent in learning,





learning, piety and virtue. As they wrought, with all diligence, to gain a clear and right understanding of the doctrines ; to follow the faith, and be conformed to the life of those ancient ornaments of Christianity ; so are they worthy of being held in remembrance ; worthy of the imitation of those of their own times, and of all who shall retain any knowledge of them. " The nearer the example is to us, the more force it acquires. The distant report of confessors and martyrs, of men who died and suffered much for the sake of religion, and the good of mankind : these examples recorded in history, being remote from us, affect us not so sensibly as the instances of piety and virtue, of distinguished fortitude and constancy in our own times, and among our own acquaintances. Their lives, as well as their instructions, admonish us in a friendly and familiar manner, to walk circumspectly and honourably, to be blameless and harmless amidst a perverse generation."—This is the language of those, who rule faithfully in the church of Christ ; who speak his word in truth and integrity, and lead the people in the way of holiness, by their own irreproachable life. To remember these men, and to follow their faith, is to retain a lively sense of that affection, esteem and reverence we had of them while living ; to recollect their pious instructions, and every help we received from them, which gave light to our understanding of the doctrines, and duties of our holy religion. It is, to give every amiable grace and excellency

excellency apparent in them, and for which we judged they merited our esteem, such consideration, as will excite us to emulate those excellencies, which heightened their qualifications, and will advance ours, for the glories of immortality.

Let it be regarded then, as highly beneficial, to cherish the idea, and sanction a reverence for the memory of those who have excelled in virtue, and proved champions in the cause of our divine Redeemer. Let it be regarded, as a proof of God's abundant goodness, that he hath let no incentive, adapted to work upon our natures, be wanting, to render us, through his grace, fellow-helpers in the great work of our salvation.—If we nourish in our bosoms the pleasing image of what we admire and love in others, and awaken our thoughts habitually to the immense reward ; it will kindle a zeal and resolution to become what we admire, that we may secure to ourselves an enjoyment with them, of what we all so ardently hope for.—Let this be done, and we shall then watch carefully over ourselves, and make it our daily employment to possess our hearts with all those good dispositions, which God requires, which promote our own inward peace, and give pleasure to others. We shall study to be in all things, resigned to his will. If he grants to us the good things of this world, and blesses us with prosperity, we shall believe it is, that we may render him the glory, by doing good according to his bounty. If he sends adversity—that it is to correct and amend

amend us, to soften our hearts, and to wean us from the vanities of the world. Then shall we ~~show~~ that we have faith in God ; a faith that will be sufficient and effectual to correct the errors of our souls, and to adorn them with the beauties of the true child of God :—that will prove a shield to guard us against all the attacks of evil :—an anchor to keep us steady and undisturbed, by the frowns or flatteries of the world.

By thus taking to us the whole armour of God, and watching with all perseverance, we shall stand, having our loins girded, and our lights burning, and be ready for our Master's coming. So shall we follow the example of those holy persons who are declared blessed for being found so doing.

So shall we hold communion with the saints on earth, by embracing the same common faith and hope of salvation, and by the common offices of piety and charity. We shall at the same time hold communion and fellowship even with the saints departed ; by rejoicing at their bliss and happiness ; by blessing God for the light of their example ; by labouring to follow it ourselves ; and by praying, that, together with them, we may at last receive the fulness of joy, and life for ever more.

Thus may we still hold communion with that blessed man, whose deeply lamented death, laid the foundation for this day's solemn assembling. As Christians we must bow with re-signation and reverence to the hand of God, who





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who with him, has stripped us of so valued a treasure. His vacant seat among us, calls up our sorrow afresh ; but we sorrow most of all that we are to see his face no more. We may lament the loss of him, because we feel it ; and he that hath chastened us by his removal, certainly wills us to feel the rod, that we may rightly regard it. But he, blessed soul, has fought a good fight, has finished his course, has kept the faith, and is now gone to receive the crown of righteousness ; and to be enrobed with that white garment which is the righteousness of the saints. He is gone to the great Shepherd and Bishop of souls, who laid down his life for the sheep, and will not fail to reward those who have rightly divided the word of life, and spent their lives in feeding the sheep of his pasture.

Just exceptions, I know, are often made against funeral characters, as exhibiting an assemblage of virtues, the portrait of partiality, and the child of fancy, but not formed from a living original. The justness of the exception is allowed—it should give caution, but cannot be a reason for its total disuse. When any person hath been eminent in his station and character, whether sacred or civil ; when he has done distinguished service in the church of God ; to let such drop unnoticed from the scene would be criminal ingratitude. God hath said the memory of the just shall be blessed. By giving praise, and being thankful to God for the labours of his faithful servants, after they are call-  
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ed from their post, and rest in their beds, we do his will. It is a tribute due to those who are gone, and may be greatly useful to those who are yet behind, travelling in the vale, and running with patience the race set before them. Behold we count them happy who endure, are the words of God's spirit and his church, spoken by St. James.

This was the voice of the primitive Christians, when they assembled at the graves of their holy men and martyrs, and celebrated their praises, with hymns, thanksgivings, and funeral orations ; exhorting each other to piety and virtue by their examples. For this, the words of our text might be thought an apostolical authority.

In that important light, long, I trust, will Bishop SEABURY be remembered, who hath left his memorial in our hearts ; long will his name live in our church, as worthy of all commendation. In the year one thousand seven hundred and eighty-three, as the war with Great-Britain was drawing near to a close ; while we were unable to confer with our brethren in the other states, but anxious to take the earliest and most effectual measures our best discernment could suggest, to procure a valid episcopate, on which, under God, the continuance and enjoyment of our religious profession would probably depend ; the clergy of this state, agreed to elect some person, to be invested with that important office. Two persons occurred to our minds, Doctor Leaming, and Doctor Seabury.

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The former, by his amiable life among us, and excellent services, merited our affections, esteem and confidence ; he had a just claim to our attention, and was our first choice. Debility, and the many bodily infirmities under which he then laboured, caused him to decline, as altogether unfit for an enterprise that required great vigour and firmness of mind. These were conspicuous in Doctor Seabury, who, in every other respect also, was the man to our wishes. He accepted of our choice ; and without delay undertook to carry our desires into effect. To the English Bishops, there appeared obstacles existing in the British government, which, it was necessary to get removed, as the first step in the prosecution of the business. Until that was done, they judged it would not be consistent, either with their wisdom, or duty, to give him consecration. Efforts were made, but unhappily without success ; and no assurance could be obtained, that our application would be more fortunate at any future period. In this situation, what remained to be done ? The alternative before him, was, either to desert the cause, or to apply elsewhere. To give over the pursuit, and let the object be lost, in his hands, was irreconcilable to his faithful and persevering mind. These circumstances finally compelled him, as they did us to desire him, to lay the condition and state of our suffering church before the Bishops in Scotland, with our requests to them for his consecration. That venerable body readily accepted of the application and  
freely





freely conferred on him the episcopate. This event therefore, we are authorised to believe, laid the foundation for the episcopate that is now in the American States.

After two years absence, and chiefly at his own expence, he returned to us. By which auspicious event, our church was furnished with a proper priesthood ; and by his discreet management, and eminent talents we were put on a footing as encouraging as our best reason would suffer us to expect. And this day, my Brethren of the clergy, we are able, and as willing to declare one to another, and to the world, how happy we were under him, as our spiritual father, brother, companion and friend. With manners engaging, and by a method judicious and easy, he would commonly collect our opinions, and if different in any matter, bring them together, and so accommodate them to his own, as, with very few exceptions, to maintain a most pleasing harmony and union among us. His visitations to all the churches in his diocese, were frequent, more so than perhaps consisted with his health, usually preaching wherever he went. The people always received him with pleasure, and a numerous audience heard him gladly.

Thus did that excellent prelate, for near eleven years, fill his seat, and with great dignity execute his office. The whole of that time he was an admirable pattern and example, conformed to the character described in the text. He had

had the rule over us, and spoke the word of God ; so that we may confidently call upon our people to follow his faith—the faith that was once delivered to the saints.

He was born and educated in this state. To the place where he received his birth he was an honour, as he was to the school of sciences wherein he laid the foundation of his future greatness. Blessed with a clear understanding, and tenacious memory, a quick comprehension, and solid judgment ; these happy endowments enabled him, by an extensive reading, and intense thinking, to render his mind a rich repository of solid and useful learning. As his own resources became great, he was indeed conscious of them, but never dogmatical or assuming ; the only use he made of them, was to be more instructive and agreeable. His judicious arrangement of thoughts, was evident to all he conversed with, by his uncommonly clear and easy method of communicating them. This was one circumstance which made him so excellent a preacher. In his preaching he did not affect to appear learned, but his discourses always fully discovered both his natural and acquired abilities. The great and good man, ever appeared in the plain speaker.

Theological niceties, and conjectural divinity were ever his aversion, because too refined and visionary either to be felt or comprehended. His one object, and therefore his chief care was to explain the great articles of faith, and

and rules of life, what we must believe, and how we must live, that we may be eternally happy.

His own vital sense of religion infused itself into his discourses, and animated them with the same divine passion that warmed his own breast. His mind was too great to seek popular applause, he only wished to have his labours well received that he might do good ; that he might prevail upon people to seek their own spiritual welfare, that he might promote the cause of Christ's church, and advance pure and undefiled religion. Confident of the solid grounds on which his religion rested, he was, agreeable to the natural firmness of his mind, inflexible in his principles ; these he accounted sacred ; from which on no occasion would he allow himself to deviate, yet with a graceful ease he could give up any thing, but the truth ; and even that he would support, if possible without giving offence.

He deliberately entertained an high opinion of the church, whose most dignified office he sustained ; because he believed her to be built on the foundation of the apostles—Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone. Her interest, as a spiritual society, abstracted from worldly power and policy, he endeavoured with great integrity to maintain, as he supported her divine authority with a masterly hand.

His stability and zeal, his attachment and perseverance in the true faith, claim a more than ordinary





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ordinary notice, at a time when so many sit loose to the fundamental articles of Christianity, think lightly of the great mysteries of our redemption by Christ; and if they do not openly avow infidelity, covertly sap the foundation of revealed religion, under the specious name of morality.

Against principles so repugnant to Christianity and dangerous to the souls of men, a number of those discourses he published, are an excellent guard. The whole are a set of fine sermons, well calculated for the use of families. Some, were professedly composed for their instruction in the nature and economy of Christ's church, and all are on subjects chosen to teach them, what, as members of that church, they are to believe and practise. Those who read them with attention, will ever find improvement, and all judges of sound reasoning and correct composition, in compliment to their own good judgment and taste, must admire the author.

Though in his last visitation some appearances of declining health were seen with concern; yet it pleased God without any preparatory admonition, to come suddenly in an instant, and at once open a passage for his soul into the world of spirits. He had nearly reached the years, which number the age of man, yet his naturally sound and vigorous constitution, without any apparent decay of his mental powers, gave reasonable hopes, that his useful life would  
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be continued for years to come. Unerring wisdom judged otherwise. He was ready, and his Lord hath called him from his station and labours here on earth, to join his church in the world above.

As both are but one church; so we may believe, that those whom he makes rulers, to whom he commits the greatest places of power, and dignity, if they adorn their office, and faithfully discharge their trust here, he will not degrade in the other world. This we may infer from those words of Christ to his apostles: *Verily I say unto you, that ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.* That is, your reward and glory in the other world, shall answer to that place of trust and power and dignity, which you have had in the church on earth. And this promise was no more peculiar to the apostles, than their office. Now, if we seriously consider the state of the other world, that the blessed Jesus sits there, enthroned in majesty and glory, king of saints, and priest of the most high God, we may safely believe, that, however little the office of the priesthood is thought of in this world; and his servants often left to do the service of his altar on earth, in much poverty and want; a very different scene will open, when we come into that kingdom, where the king is himself

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an high priest, and will reward the labours of all those who serve him in sincerity and truth.\*

This, my reverend brethren, should be our mighty consolation, under all the cares and inquietudes of our solemn employments. Let it ever dwell with us, to encourage us to diligence and faithfulness in that part of the ministry which is committed to our trust. The pious counsel of our late beloved bishop, given to us, in his admired charges, we have still in our hands: let us now often read them, that the words he hath spoken may abide with us, for the honour of our Lord and of his church. Let us remember his conversation and labours of love, and strive the more earnestly to preserve our wonted harmony and brotherly affection inviolate.

We have one Lord, who is our head, one faith, as a principle of action, one spirit, to quicken and knit us together in that one faith, one hope of our calling, to animate us in our duty, one church, the body of that one Lord, in which we serve, let the servants be one in peace and love. Let us discharge our duty faithfully in that holy church, and wait patiently

\* When a man is careful to say what is good, and to do what is honest, to speak well and act better, endeavouring to be what he would seem to be, avoiding all suspicions and appearances of evil, when he is zealous according to his capacity for the promoting of public good, acting sincerely, prudently and justly; endeavouring to make the times the better for him wherever he lives, this will be the most effectual means to make his name honourable and his memory precious.

Bishop Wilkins.

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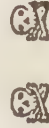
ently a while, and the Lord will come, and his reward is with him, and blessed, for ever blessed, are those servants, whom their Lord when he cometh, shall find so doing.

Finally, Let us ever bless God's holy name for all his servants departed this life in his faith and fear, and beseech him to give us grace, so to follow their good examples, that with them we may be partakers of his heavenly kingdom.

And, with our prayers for this unspeakable gift, let it be our incessant care, to make good that apostolic exhortation, which equally concerns, and is equally directed to all.

My beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labour shall not be in vain in the Lord.

To God the Father, the Son, and the holy Ghost, be all honour and glory, dominion and power, now and for ever more. AMEN.



BISHOP JARVIS'S

CHARGE

TO THE

Clergy of his Diocese.

DELIVERED

IMMEDIATELY AFTER HIS

CONSECRATION,

In Trinity Church, NEW-HAVEN,

ON THE FESTIVAL OF ST. LUKE,  
OCTOBER 18, 1797.

TOGETHER WITH THE

ADDRESSES

Of the Convention of the Protestant  
Episcopal Church, in Connecticut,  
to their Bishop.

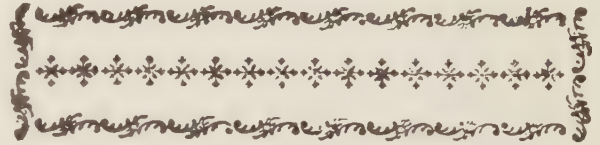
AND THE

BISHOP'S ANSWER.

PRINTED AT NEWFIELD,  
By LAZARUS BEACH.



1798.



Bishop JARVIS'S CHARGE.



MY REVEREND AND DEAR BRETHREN.

UNDER the good providence of God, we are assembled, on an occasion both solemn and interesting to us of the clergy, and to the church. The character in which I now address you, is by divine permission devolved upon me, through your unanimous, and in respect of myself, unmerited suffrage. Much are we obliged to the Bishops\* for their attention to your application; and our most hearty thanks are due to them, for the pains they have taken in coming here, to ratify your election, and supply this diocese with the office, made vacant by the death of our late Bishop, of blessed memory. My own feelings assure me, that the transactions of this day, must have called up afresh to your remembrance, former painful sensations on the loss we sustained, in the death of that most amiable and excellent prelate, who by every means endeared himself to us; and whom so many years experience taught us, most highly to esteem and admire.

\* Bishop White, Bishop Provost and Bishop Bass.





It is your unhappiness that he is succeeded by one, who thinks it no degradation, to acknowledge himself every way his unequal; and whose feelings would be gratified by never being brought into a comparison with him; Although he would esteem himself honoured, in the enjoyment of a lower seat near him.

BUT what is wanting in abilities on my part, I trust confidently, will be considered as an additional reason, for greater and more united exertions on yours, to make good the deficiency. Your friendship, together with your well grounded affections for the interest of religion, the good and welfare of the church, will, I cannot doubt, incline you to accept candidly, and assist with your best aids the well meant endeavours of one, who can with the utmost sincerity assure you, of his having an equal desire with you, to be useful according to his capacity; and is not less concerned for the interests of religion, and of this church. Most seriously is it to be lamented, that there is so much need of anxious concern on the subject.

THE church of Christ hath always had, and always will have her enemies. The Kingdom of Christ is not of this world. To that kingdom, the children of this world will, some way or other, be opposed; either by open unbelief, or by errors in faith, or viciousness of life. The persons who belong to any of these descriptions, will be found, in different degrees, to be disaffected to religion in general; or, from various unhappy causes, to the duties it prescribes, or the life it requires. As men are well or ill affected towards religion, so are they accordingly affected towards the clergy, who are the teachers & supporters of it. Those who reverence christianity, and its sacred institutions, will reverence the priest-

hood, which is of the same divine establishment; through the ministry of which, they can only enjoy the consolations and blessings of their holy faith and religion. On the other hand, those who seek to undermine religion, and bring it into disrepute, are always adversaries to the Clergy. Active in discipling others to their own opinions, their first step commonly is, to persuade people to think meanly of, and to treat the clergy with contempt. As they succeed in this point, so they prepare them to sneer at, and ridicule religion; to neglect and slight public worship, and all public institutions. That this is an existing, and that it is a growing evil among us, we of the clergy, with deep concern, see and feel. In like manner does it affect the regular, and serious part of our people. It may however, afford some satisfaction to observe, that in general, they, who would deprive us of our orders and usefulness, are the very men, who would rob their Redeemer, of his eternal Godhead and Divinity.

WHAT is personal, ought to be of the least consideration. We are to expect tribulation in this world, and are bound to bear with patience, reproaches for his sake, whose servants we are. We are bound also to take heed, not to deserve them. *The Servant is not above his Master. It is enough for the disciple, that he be as his Master, and the servant as his Lord: if they have called the Master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of his household.\**—None of us, even the best, are in every respect, such as we ought to be. This use therefore we may make of their censures, tho' a very different one, from what our adversaries intend, namely, to correct the

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\* Matt. 10. 25.

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things, wherein we may perceive ourselves to be blameworthy, or may appear so to others: and their unbounded aspersions, may and should, excite us to take more diligent heed, that, as far as it is possible in us, our ministry be not blamed, or found upon the fullest enquiry to deserve it. So that—*In much patience—By pureness, by knowledge, by long suffering, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned—By honour and dishonour, by evil report and good report,—As poor, yet making many rich—in all things approving ourselves, as the ministers of God.\**

No serious mind can be insensible, that to be God's minister must be to hold an office of high dignity: that it is an office, in its design greatly benevolent, and useful, and in its due execution, most extensively beneficial; and nothing can be more fatal in its consequences, than the neglect and abuse of it.

LET us then look up to the head, and founder of the pastoral office, the great Shepherd and Bishop of our souls; and behold him, in the depth of humility and meekness, teaching the ignorant, relieving the distressed, and labouring to save lost sinners. Let us recollect those, to whom he first committed the charge, of carrying on the same great work; and see them, through much tribulation, doing the work of their master, and from thence learn our calling: and under the darkest appearances, take courage, and be faithful to do our duty, and he will take care of the event.

To rescue fallen nature from the miseries of its Apostasy, and cleanse it of those corruptions, by

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\* 2 Cor. 6 ch. 4. 6c



which it lay in ruins ; was the design and end, for which Jesus came into the world, clothed by the Father with an everlasting priesthood. From these corruptions, sprang all that contradiction of sinners, all those sorrows and sufferings, which he endured. They have been, and still are, the source of all that opposition, which, his priests and ambassadors have met with, in his service, and of all the hardships they have undergone, in the labour of bringing men to their duty, and reconciling them to God ; from the time, in which he sojourned on earth, down to this day. All this was perfectly foreseen by him, who knew all things. He accordingly, prepared his disciples for what they were to meet with ; by telling them plainly beforehand, *Behold, I send you forth as Sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.\** Certainly no office, or employment, can require greater, or more unremitting exertions ; no one calls for more prudence, composure, and fortitude ; accompanied with a well tempered zeal for the happiness of others, and an exemplary life, to encourage and guide them in the path of Salvation.

Of this every clergyman ought to be duly sensible, and by frequent reflections, to make it familiar to his mind, to prepare him to act with good judgment, and a religious sense of duty, under all the adverse casualties that may occur in the due execution of his office.

For the more faithful discharge of his duty, he should at no time forget, that he is the servant and minister, the steward and ambassador, of Jesus

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\* *Matt. 10. 16.*

Christ. These are titles honorary indeed, but all of them expressive, of a state of dependance, and subjection ; and speak the person to whom they belong, not at liberty to act his own humour :—but under the strictest obligation, to observe the commands of that heavenly Lord and Master, whose servant and minister he is. Obedience to his commands, is what all christians are bound to pay ; but the obligation is yet stronger upon the clergy ; as the near relation they stand in to him, by the priesthood they bear, adds to all their engagements.—Every argument, for the performance of christian duties in common, concludes more particularly, for the faithful, and regular discharge of the duties of their sacred function ; for the due execution of those great offices, and the pursuance of those ends, for which they were invested with this character.—It is the dignity of our office, to represent and display the honour of our great high priest, by whose authority we act ; and to answer the exigences of his church. We must therefore sincerely endeavour to promote those purposes, or we violate the design of our ordination, and are manifestly deficient, in the duty we owe to him, as his ministers.

PERMIT me then, my Brethren, in this my first address, to lead your attention to some particulars, which I trust, you will consider with me, as important to the rightful discharge of our duty, and interesting to the people of our cures.

THE first I will mention to you is, that, as clergymen, and Ambassadors of Christ, it is an incumbent branch of our duty, to use our best endeavours, that the people of our cure may understand well their christian profession ; what are the duties they owe to God, as members of the church of Christ ; and, as much as possible, to attach their minds,

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and religious affections, to the performance of them.

Now in order for this, people must understand the nature of the church : the relation they stand in to its head ; what they must do, that they may be true and sound members of, and attain to the blessings, he has annexed to it. It cannot escape our notice that the people of our congregations, instead of attending to the instructions of the church, to which they belong ; have from other sources, lost sight, to an unhappy degree, of the means ordained by our gracious redeemer, for our access to and communion with him : through which we are to partake of the aids of the Holy Spirit, to sanctify our hearts, and obtain the forgiveness of our sins : And in their place have substituted preaching or hearing of Sermons as the chief or only business of church assemblies. Thus, what was in its original institution and use, for the purpose of instructing men in the faith of the Gospel, and to awaken their consciences to do all that is therein commanded for Salvation, is hereby perverted, and made in itself an act of religion ; and the end of meeting for a public, and religious service. So that preaching in the church, it is to be feared, perhaps it may be affirmed, has contributed much to cast religion out of it. This, as I apprehend, is a sad and dangerous departure from the genius, and spirit of the christian religion. A good knowledge of the christian church, as to its nature and design, will effectually correct so gross a mistake.

THE church is not of an human, but of a divine original. In its nature it is an institution of God ; a regular society, founded by divine authority. It is the church of Christ ; because he purchased it





with his blood. He called it out, and separated it from the world, that it might be holy unto himself; and the school of holiness to all, who being admitted into it, would conform to its holy and divine nature. For this purpose he appointed its government, instituted its priesthood, and ordained its sacraments. He bestowed on it his holy Spirit. He is the founder of its faith, and he gave to it the promise of eternal life. Could we persuade people; thus seriously to enquire into, and make themselves acquainted with the nature of the Christian church; they would be convinced, that the design of its institution is to call them from the dominion of sin; from a subjection to their fleshly lusts,—and passions, the vanities and follies of this wicked world; to an union with Christ, and with each other; by a new power from the holy Spirit, and to train them up, in virtue and holiness, to the Kingdom of Heaven.\*

As they realize this to be the design of the church, and the end of its institution, they will have more correct and truer notions, of the relation they bear to Christ, their redeemer and spiritual head. By faith in him their Saviour, they are his disciples: and being incorporated by his Spirit, under him, they are a holy society; who, as members, form one body, united to him their head. Under this emblem, all Christians should see their connection, subordination, and dependance, upon this their head. The body is a regular structure, the limbs of which, being joined together, are subordinate and subservient to one another, and are animated by the same soul or Spirit. *For by one Spirit we are all baptised into one body. Being planted*

into Christ by the holy Spirit, he, as the head, communicates nourishment to his body, and its several members, through the operations of the Spirit, conveyed in the ordinances of his church. In the faithful use of these means, blessed and sanctified by him, his body is edified and built up in him, perfected in all things that pertain to life eternal.

As we succeed in bringing our people, thus to understand the nature and economy of the church of Christ, our labours will be productive of this good effect; they will learn to distinguish rightly, the holy offices of the church, from the discourses delivered to them from the pulpit; and to place their principal regard, upon the prayers and sacraments, as means whereby they hold communion, and have fellowship with the Father, and his son Jesus Christ. Being well grounded in these doctrines, we may then reasonably expect, that our people will come to church, under a clear and full sense of their duty; that they may perform it, in all due acts of adoration, petition and praise; and express the becoming affections of grateful hearts, for the privileges they enjoy in God's church, in the means of grace, and helps to a holy life, they there receive; and the hopes of future glory, of which they ate the earnest and pledge.

ACTUATED by these principles, they will come to church, for the sake of the prayers, and sacraments. In these, they will enjoy the sincere delight of Christian communion, in the pledges of their redeemer's munificence on the church, and happy sensations will rise in their breasts, and flow with their devotions to Jesus—who was crucified for sin—hur—Being exalted to the right hand of God—*"hath shed forth those streams of the water of life, which have been flowing ever since, from the*

\* See Bp. Seabury's Sermon, of Christian Unity.

throne of God and the lamb, through the appointed channels, to water every plant and flower in the Garden of God."

To honour our redeemer, in his own institutions and services, is the bounden duty of all Christians. It is eminently the duty of the clergy; that they may prove themselves faithful stewards of those heavenly mysteries, with which they are intrusted; and to entitle them, with confidence, to look for his gracious protection and favour. Hence all Christians, who will attend to us, and with minds open to the truth, hear from us, the things which belong to sound faith and godliness, will properly fort, and duly estimate, their respective religious duties, and will rare each, according to its importance. They will think lightly of none, but they will more highly reverence some than others; although they will conscientiously practice all. While we are diligent to press them, to be anxiously careful of their everlasting felicity; they will be steady and devout, in the public worship of God—as being called to one common duty, the duty of honoring and glorifying him, with one mouth and one voice—As children of one family, members of one body—having one hope of our calling, and being heirs of one common salvation. Their devotions will be animated with humble and hearty desires, that their wants, spiritual and temporal, may be supplied by our heavenly Father; and that by the same devotions, their hearts may be fixed, in the firmest resolutions of holy obedience. These desires and resolutions, thus kindled, will not suffer them to tarry behind, or stop with the ordinary service of the church. Delighting to tread the courts of the Lord's house, they will go forward to his altar, and in the sacred symbols there exhibited, will eat of that bread, which came down from hea-





ven ; and drink of that cup which giveth life to the world.

ENLIGHTENED by the doctrines of the scriptures, faithfully stated to them by us, the worship they pay to God, will be understood, not as an arbitrary demand, merely to shew his sovereignty over us, but as a natural right, indispensibly due to him, the maker of all things : who gives us life, and continually provideth all things for us. In like manner, the positive institutions of the Gospel, will be received, as gracious appointments in the scheme of our redemption, and recovery to life and bliss in Christ. The holy eucharist will be applied, as the means of keeping up that spiritual life, the principle of which we received in our new birth, at our baptism ; and of continuing that interest, in the benefits and blessings of christ's passion and death, which was made over to us, when we became members of his mystical body.

PRESUMING, according to my knowledge of your sentiments, my Brethren, that it is your desire, people should be well informed of their duty, and their lives be conformed to the precepts of the Gospel ; I have mentioned these things, as essential to the character, and life of the christian. But it may be proper to add a further observation ; that the means should ever be enforced, as they should always be used, with a view to the end of religion ; and carefully discriminated from it.

THE end of Religion is the salvation of our souls. The Son of God came to seek and to save that which was lost. The church itself, and all its services, were erected and appointed for this purpose. Every act of which, as a part of her service, is therefore an act of religion, because it is a means to pre-

pare and fit us for the enjoyment of a happy state with God. While we are in the church in this world, we are in God's vineyard, are his husbandry, in complying with his commands, and doing his will, the outward and personal act is ours, the inward is his, in fashioning the soul, through the instrumentality of his institutions, into his own likeness and image. This is the spiritual building, formed by the hand of God, to endure forever. For the raising and finishing of this building, positive rites and ordinances, and all outward acts are but the scaffolding ; when the building is completed, the scaffolds are removed and fall off, as being of no farther use.

WAS this truth attended to according to its importance, the close connection christ hath established, between the external ministrations of his church, and the internal renovation of the soul, would be more perfectly discerned, and comprehended. As christians come to think, and believe rightly concerning these things, they will see the necessity of communion in the prayers and sacraments of the church. These, accompanied with reading the holy scriptures, which, in the sense of those scriptures, is preaching, and the best of preaching ; as they of right challenge, so will they not fail, to be most regarded and venerated. Sound religion, and vital active piety, will prevail, in proportion as the duties of the Gospel are thus understood, and practiced. People will then become more regular, and steady ; and by the habits of steadfastness, will daily increase, and grow up in their holy faith, until they come unto God's everlasting kingdom. It will prevent them from being tossed to and fro, by every self authorized novel teacher, and carried about, by every wind of doctrine, with which the ignorant enthusiast, or the more subtle deceiver, strive to delude them.

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And here I may observe, that the christian faith and practice, understood in the light I have considered them, can hardly fail of leading people, into a due sense of the importance of the christian priesthood.

" THE regular ministers, (you have here the words of the archbishop Usher) are authorized to declare God's pleasure unto such as believe and repent, and in his name to certify and give full assurance to their consciences, that their sins are forgiven. For though others may indeed bring glad tidings of good things to the penitent sinner, as truly as they do, yet neither is it to be expected that they should, or indeed that they can do it, with the same authority and power, with such full assurance and such entire satisfaction to the afflicted, broken and wounded conscience."

St. Paul tells us that Christ whom God had given to be head over all things to the church—gave some apostles, some pastors and teachers ; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of christ. Till we all come, in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ,

CAN the intelligent christian do otherwise than reverence that office, by which he was regenerated, and grafted into the body of christ's church : by which, in the consecrated elements of bread and wine, he is admitted to the inestimable privilege of eating the flesh, and drinking the blood of the Son of God.—That blood which cleanseth from all sin, and whosoever doth it in true faith and penitence, his Saviour hath said, hath eternal life abiding in him ? in brief,—To his ministers. God hath given





power and commandment, to declare and pronounce to his people, being penitent, the absolution and remission of their sins : To them he hath committed the means, and ministrations of grace. By them men put on Christ, and are united to the Son of God ; by whose prevalent acts, they are constituted members of his sacred polity, and communion. Christ's ministers lead in the prayers and praises of his church, and present them to him, the great high priest, which, perfumed by his own merits, he presents to the Father. Divine mercies in return, descend through this prevailing intercessor, and by his priests, regularly serving at his altar, are dispensed in the word and sacraments, and by blessing his people, in his name, and by his authority.

AN office thus connected with all the parts form the system of christian faith and worship, must be held in reverend esteem by all who have any true notions of, or any real regard for them. It cannot in reason be imputed to the clergy, that they preach up themselves, when they teach the nature and duties of their office ; for all are equally concerned to know, how they are to be saved by Christ. Whosoever he hath appointed must be important ; and they cannot know the use and end of his servants, and their appointments, without knowing, that priests are ordained for men, in things pertaining to God ; and that we are their servants for Jesus sake.

THERE is one point more to which I would call your attention. And if the fact be, as I conceive it is, we ought industriously to combat, what is so false in principle, and pernicious in practice.

By the language and conduct of men, we are to judge what are their religious principles. These

show but too plainly, that the gospel is considered by many, as being a mere system of opinions or doctrines, and conceive, that an assent to them, with the observation of some outward forms of general repute, and a behaviour that passes without reproach, in the vulgar eye, is all that is required, to constitute the christian character. The christian religion is indeed a system of doctrines, or truths, revealed in the gospel ; for which we are bound earnestly to contend. But the mistake is, and it is a dangerous one ; that the truths of the gospel, are mere speculative opinions, of which, men are at liberty to frame their own notions, as they chuse, and each one for himself. If they can flatter themselves that they are *sincere*, they may judge themselves safe, and their opinions true, for with them *sincerity* is the only thing necessary. This principle being allowed, it is equally good in every man, and proves every man's opinions equally true. Hence the unity of the church is destroyed. Prayer, public and private, are called in question, whether founded in reason, or of any utility. The necessity of the Sacraments, their use and significance, become greater or less, or nothing at all, just as mens-opinions are. Men may divide and subdivide, into sects and parties, without number, and without end, and every mans conduct passes as harmless, without crime, in going where they please, in joining whom they please, and worshipping God as they please, in retired solitude, or a public assembly, in mute silence, or vocal harmony. The scriptures are to be interpreted according to every man's private judgment, whether he be learned or unlearned : and private judgment is the standard, by which, the truths or doctrines of the scriptures are to be measured ; and all rest upon this foundation, that christianity is a religion of opinions. Private judgment is ever to be valued,

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and ever used ; its right ought never to be denied. But it should be remembered, that where there is a right, there is also a duty, and he who only attends to the former, and neglects the latter is sure to be in an error. Private judgment should also be claimed & used, as being private. And though one man may not be obtruded upon, or deprived of that right by another, yet he is accountable to God for his private judgment, and opinions, as he is, for the right use, or abuse, of all his faculties, and for all the means which God affords him, to know and do what he ought. But whatever opinions men entertain, and however corrupt & hurtful to themselves, so long as they confine, and conduct them, within their own right, they will do no injury to others, nor disturb the peace and order of society.

On the contrary, when particular opinions cause men to disregard the united Judgement, and voice of God's church, when they lead men to put forced constructions, upon the plainest things written in the word of God ; when they dispose men to transgress his clear, and express commands ; when they slacken, and melt down, all zeal for christ's church, as he framed and modeled it ; for the faith he laid as the foundation ; for the orders and institutions he hath erected, as the mounds about it ; and for the commands he hath given, to govern and perfect its members : The principle, which brings forth such fruits, whose end is the dissolution of the church, as a Society ; and makes every man a church to himself ; is so visibly contrary to the whole scheme, and plan of the gospel ; to its leading and fundamental doctrines, that it must be the duty of the clergy, to watch against, and do their utmost to correct such false and baneful tenets, wherever they meet with them ; and to persuade men to think more justly, to receive those truths, and di-





rect their minds by those doctrines, which are according to the Scriptures, and more certainly accompany salvation. It is *not* he that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth. He that will be saved, must be saved in the way which God hath appointed, and not in any way of his own. We shall be judged at last according to God's word, not according to any persuasions we may have taken up, through the prejudices of education, or the perverseness of our own hearts; all of which are indeed no better than dreams, having no foundation but on that loose bottom of human imagination, on which are built, all the visions of the night, and all the heresies in the world.\*

THE several points to which, in the foregoing, I have led your attention, I hope, my Brethren, you will approve of. In my apprehension they are matters of weight. And though they comprehend but a part of our duty as clergymen, they may serve to shew in no small degree, how delicate and curious is the work, to frame the minds of men into right principles, solid and clear notions of the redeemer's kingdom, how noble is the employment to watch over the church, that God bought with his own blood. The Son of God is the first of our order, the founder of our Society. Now when we consider how various are the spiritual necessities of his church, the ignorance, mistakes, and negligence of the people, the arts, sophistry, and wiles of the adversary; these things carry conviction, that nothing but an inexhaustible source can supply its wants.

Let these things be duly considered by us, and

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\* See *Essay on the Church*.

let us thereby be engaged, to support and adorn our function, both by our lives, and doctrine. The way to do this, is to take care—

**FIRST**—To be orthodox in our opinions, keeping firm and steady to that form of sound words, delivered by Christ and his Apostles, and handed down to us by the church: giving no ear, much less a favourable reception, to those novel doctrines, which are only ancient heresies, newly dressed, and broached, by restless lovers of novelty, or by ambitious designing men. A general good rule in divinity is, the more ancient the better. What is new, is a good reason why it cannot be true. In theological questions, that which hath been always, and every where, and by all received, is a safe and just standard. The streams of those waters of the Sanctuary, being the more pure, the nearer they are to the fountain head.

**SECONDLY**—Another subject, which it concerns us duly to attend to, is the observing uniformity in the government, and worship of our church. For these, the rules prescribed by the church, should be regarded with as great exactness as possible. The rubrics where they are definite, should direct us in the administration of our office, without deviation, or in any case, as little as may be. Where there is a latitude, individuals may judge of the propriety of it; in unnecessary cases, and it is not an easy matter to find any that are otherwise, they may regret, that any latitude is allowed; yet the inconveniences may in some measure be avoided, if we act up to our former resolutions, that all should observe the same method, in all parts of the service. This uniformity will continue to give, as I trust it has had, its happy effects, in the satisfaction, harmony, and unity, it contributes to establish, both

among us of the clergy, and among our people.—For as we esteem it a great excellence of our church, that with one mouth, and one voice, we worship God, in one beautiful system of sound words; so the more strictly we adhere to the same order in every part of the service, the more perfectly shall we illustrate that excellence.

A THIRD particular, we should be assiduous to cultivate and maintain, is love and unity among ourselves. Disaffection, and opposition among the clergy, lessens their influence, often compels them to submit to, and do things they ought not, and if they were unanimous, and would support each other, they need not do. It is ever a matter of triumph, as it affords great advantage to the adversaries of religion. Religion itself is injured, and its friends suffer, by having their minds perplexed about its truths, or by weakening the power of it upon their lives. From the ministers of Christ, dedicated to his service, and teachers of his religion, example is very justly expected. Unfeigned love to God, and benevolence to men, is the pure spirit, to which all the doctrines of the gospel have the most powerful tendency, and do actually generate, in the hearts of all its genuine disciples. The ministers of Christ should take heed to realize in themselves, the truths and spirit of that religion, they are bound to preach. The first and fair fruits, that spring from thence, will be love and unity with their Brethren, and fellow labourers. This assemblage of the amiable graces of the Christian, will dispose the conscientious clergyman, to be critical in respect of his own reputation; it will render him equally critical and tender of the reputation of his Brethren. A spot in his garment is easily contracted, but hard to wipe off; it is discerned with an eagle's eye; and the bow of





bander stands ready bent, to pierce him through with her dart.

We can do but little by ourselves, to defend the inclosures of the church, and train up children to our divine head. We are weak and feeble; the wickedness of men makes us more so; yet, if every one made his brother's reputation, dear to him as his own, we might do very much to vindicate the innocence, to extenuate the infirmities, to remove the reproaches, that the faithless and vicious cast upon the order. The weakest things knit together make a strong resistance, for tho we fight not with carnal weapons, yet those we make use of are mighty, under God, to break and shatter the kingdom of darkness and all its retinue.

WERE this our conduct, we might, with that confidence true virtue always gives, ask the man, in whom zeal for the welfare of his fellow creatures, burns with the brightest & most ardent flame, what his patriotic and generous heart could wish more, than that men might be brought to this blessed temper of mind? Wherever it prevailed in its full extent, it would universally reform; and the church, blessed with such faithful sons, would be, and might appear to her enemies, according to the language of Solomon, *Beautiful as Tirzah, and comely as Jerusalem, and terrible as an army of banners.*

PERMIT me to exercise your patience a few moments longer, while I suggest a reflection or two, to the lay members of the convention.

As the clergy have their duties it must be remembered, that the laity have theirs. If it is our duty to take the oversight of the church, and family or Christ, as being thereunto appointed; it must

be the duty of the laity so to account of us; and by a willing and discreet compliance, enable us, as God's watchmen, to execute our trust, in all good conscience. It is a piece of justice to yourselves and to us, to lay a part all prejudice, to hear with sobriety and reason, and consider with candour, what we say to you on the great truths, and the general or particular duties of christianity; the things that make for the good and peace of the church; the beauty and perfection of her holy worship; and for every one, according to the influence he bears, among the people of his respective church, to give proof of his own, by doing his best to engage the zeal of all others, for our common religion.

A few judicious, active, and exemplary men, in a congregation, can give strength and energy to the instructions, and labours of a faithful clergyman, more than any, without seeing the effects, would be apt to imagine. Why should not christians, shew a zeal to support the faith and church of christ, equal to that, which the infidel shews to destroy them? For, what does the infidel expect and hope? that he should be thus active and zealous? If he is consistent with himself, Nothing—beyond this world. What does the christian? Every thing that can dignify and exalt the human mind. What does the infidel labour to rob and strip you of? Your faith and religion; and with them, every thing that affords you solid comfort in this life, or happiness and glory in the next. And while they, who toil and drudge in that workhouse of iniquity, are constantly sending abroad their artful and elaborate absurdities, to corrupt the minds of the common people, and divest them of all principles, which gives security to government, order and peace in civil society, and are the basis of all morality and virtue; ought you not, in honour to God and his

christ,—as friends to your fellow men, to civil government and public order.—To private justice, and common humanity;—ought you not to strive to establish, and give currency to your religion? A religion, which is so beneficial to all orders and degrees, and adapted to make men of every description, happy in themselves, and instruments of happiness to others. The clergy of our church, teaching her doctrines, and acting according to her rules, are ministers of peace, and supporters of rational and good government. It must therefore be the true interest of government to encourage and support them,

“To these things Brethren, if we have any concern for the interests of religion, or our own, we must always industriously attend; but especially in such times, as by no means admit of negligence or mismanagement. Yet vain will be our best endeavours, unless we constantly add to them, our fervent prayers, that God would enable and strengthen both us, and all that serve him in the gospel of his Son, to perform our duty with faithfulness and success. For we are not sufficient to think any thing of ourselves: our sufficiency is of God. What therefore we ought, every one of us, to beg of him at all times, let us all present, jointly address him for, in the comprehensive and expressive words of our public service.”

*Almighty and everlasting God, by whose spirit the whole body of the church is governed and sanctified; receive our supplications and prayers, which we offer before thee, for all estates of men in thy holy church; that every member of the same, in his vocation and ministry, may truly and godly serve thee, through our Lord and Saviour Jesus christ. Amen.*

• A. Bp. Dackers first charge.





## ADDRESS

Of the Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church, in the State of Connecticut, to the Right Rev. Doctor Abraham Jarvis, Bishop of the Diocese.

REVEREND FATHER,

**W**E, the Presbyters and Lay-Representatives of the Protestant, Episcopal Church, in the State of Connecticut, avail ourselves of the earliest opportunity; that could have been presented to us, to congratulate you, upon your elevation to the dignified station of a Bishop, in the Church of Christ. Most cordially, Sir, do we recognize you in that sacred character, and most readily do we receive you, as our Superintendant and Guide;—promising with cheerfulness and from a sense of duty, to pay you all that respect and obedience, to which your office entitles you; and which, we are assured from the word of God, and the testimony of antiquity, was ever deemed to be due to the sacred Character, with which you are invested.

**J**OYFUL, Sir, as is the present occasion, which fills the Episcopal Chair, yet, the solemn scene

D

Bishop Jarvis's Answer.

MY REVEREND BRETHREN,  
*Beloved in our Lord Jesus Christ.*

**I** RETURN you my sincere thanks for your affectionate address, Permit me to request you and the lay Gentlemen of the convention to accept my assurance of the warm and grateful affections, with which I receive your declarations of personal regard and friendship.

Your sentiments of the sacred office of a Bishop, perfectly accord with my own, and compel me to observe the restraint they lay upon me, from gratulating myself on being promoted to that dignified station. Your united judgment of the circumstances, and situation of our church; and an unequivocal assurance, that in your opinion, her exigencies, in a pressing manner required it; were the prevalent reasons that overruled me, to acquiesce in your election to the office, with which I am now invested.

**D**ISTINGUISHED as our late revered Bishop was, for his eminent abilities; and amiable for the ornaments of the christian; the recent act performed in your sight, of consecrating a successor to the vacant chair, could not fail to recall *him*, with vigour to your remembrance, So interesting a life, justified the strongest apprehensions, that his death was an omen of unhappy import to our church,

that has just been performed, irresistibly leads back our minds, in sad remembrance to *him*, whom, we have often seen, from that Altar breaking the Bread of Life, and have often heard from that Pulpit, uttering the words of Peace, But, Sir, portentous to the Church, as was the moment, when the great disposer of events called to his reward, our late much revered Bishop, yet we trust, nay are confident, that your best abilities will be exerted, to mitigate the loss of that wisdom and zeal, for which, he was so highly distinguished, Whatever depends upon us to lighten the burden, which, your office imposes upon you, shall be cheerfully contributed. Esteeming your personal character, as we unquestionably ought, and revering the Authority, with which you are clothed, as we assuredly do, your Episcopate opens with a prospect of Peace and harmony throughout your Diocese. This state of the Church is, at all times, devoutly to be wished; but perhaps, never more than at present, when unity is so necessary to render fruitless, all the attacks of infidelity and vice. May that divine spirit, who is the source of unity and love, continue to preserve this Church, under your Episcopate, in the most perfect Concord! And may zeal for promoting virtue and religion, ever distinguish the Bishop, the Clergy, and the Laity of the Church of Connecticut!

New-Haven, October—1797.





Known unto God are all his works, in wisdom doth he dispose them all, and that unerring hand, which directeth the whole to his own glory, often strikes away all other props, to convince men, that in him alone is their unfailing strength.

MAY a wise and gracious providence so order events, as to evince the rectitude of our intentions, and that our proceedings may be for his honour, and the good of his church.

NEXT to the guidance and protection of our all gracious head, I do, and must, rely on your friendship and benevolence, to prevent, or remove, those difficulties and impediments, which, contemplated in prospect, filled me with diffidence, and caused a reluctance, which, even as yet, I have not been able wholly to surmount. Sensible I am that in me emphatically *this treasure* is lodged in an *earthen vessel*; from the divine aid and support, and the constant united assistance, of you my brethren, it is, that I can hope, in any measure, to do the duties of the office committed to my trust. Altho' solicitude and anxious doubts abide me, yet while strengthened by these helps, I may solace my heart, that the important interests of that part of the church of christ, over which I am appointed to preside, will not materially suffer, so long as, by divine permission, the charge shall rest on me to superintend her weighty concerns.

THAT the redeemer's kingdom may flourish, the spirit of the Gospel prevail, and its laws be obeyed, is ever to be the object of our desires, & the subject of our prayers. To promote so great a work, much depends on the exertions, and pious labours of the clergy. The assistance you give of these, and that you will ever study to cultivate the strictest harmon-

ny, and be ever ready with your best advice, as they are expressive of a well directed zeal, so are they satisfactory, and minister grounds of confidence, not to be drawn from any other source.

CHARITY is the bond of perfectness: It is the cement which knits together the church; in every member perfects the child of God, and completes the family of christ.

As this virtue is the summary, and crown of christian graces; by cherishing it in our own breasts, and exercising it amongst ourselves, we shall shew, that we are the true disciples, and faithful ministers of christ; his peace, which passeth knowledge, shall keep our hearts and minds; it will give energy to our labours, & render us examples to our flocks.

My future conduct, I trust, will manifest my real respect and sincere affections for you, and all, whom we serve in the Gospel of our Lord. In addition to your advice, and assistance, in our respective sacred labours; let our prayers be mutual for each other, that God will continue us, and his church, in his holy keeping; and enable both you and me, to fulfil our ministry; and that the people, especially committed to our charge, may be a mutual blessing, and a crown of rejoicing to us, and to each other, in the day when the Son of God shall appear in glory, to judge and to reward.

ABRAHAM, Bp. Epl. ch. Connect.

New-Haven, Oct. 18, 1797.







# Extract from the Journals of the Convocation of the Protestant Episcopal Church of Connecticut.

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At a Meeting of the Bishop, Prelbyters and Deacons of the Protestant Episcopal Church of Connecticut in Convocation, holden at the house of Mrs. Sarah Munday, in Stamford, on the 16th day of October, 1805 :

**R**ESOLVED, That the following communication be sent to Carey Leeds, Alexander Bishop and others, who are dissatisfied with the ecclesiastical proceedings of the Bishop and Clergy of the Diocese of Connecticut, in regard to Mr. Ammi Rogers :

THE Bishop and Clergy of the Diocese of Connecticut, sincerely desirous to promote the peace, and preserve the authority of the Church, have met at Stamford, in the hope that, by a friendly conference with you, it would be in their power to satisfy you of the propriety and duty of submitting to the sentence pronounced on Mr. Ammi Rogers. They regret that your refusal to engage in a personal conference has prevented that full discussion of the subject which in every point of view was so desirable. By persons who profess themselves Churchmen in principle and practice, they still cherish the hope that the following statement of facts from the authority of the Church will be duly regarded.

It appears from page 17 of the Journal of the House of Bishops, a copy of which we herewith transmit to you, that on Friday, Sept. 14, 1804, a memorial was laid on the table from the Rev. Ammi Rogers, accompanied with sundry documents, and a letter requesting that a day may be appointed for the consideration of the points therein stated." And it further appears that the following Monday was assigned for the purpose, and notice thereof given to Mr. Rogers. From page 19, it appears, that the House of Bishops resolved to go into an investigation of the matters which Mr. Rogers had brought before them, in presence of such members of the House of Clerical and Lay Deputies as should possess any information on the subject. From page 20, it appears, that the Clerical members from the State of Connecticut were admitted to a hearing on the subject of Mr. Rogers, *in his presence*; documents on both sides were read, and a hearing was given to the parties concerned. From pages 21 and 22, it appears, that in consequence of an application from Mr. Rogers, made in the absence of the Clergy from Connecticut, the House of Bishops resolved that nothing should be done in the business except in the *presence of both parties*; and that, on a further application of a Clerical member from Connecticut, both parties were introduced on the following day, and a further hearing was given. From page 23, it appears, that at 7 o'clock, P. M. of the same day, the House of Bishops met; and that the Right Reverend Bishop White, the Right Rev. Bishop Moore, and the Right Reverend Bishop Parker, were present; and that these Bishops came to a determination, from which the following is an extract :

"After full enquiry, and fair examination of all the evidence that could be procured, it appears to this House, That the said Ammi Rogers had produced to the Standing Committee of New-York (upon the strength of which he obtained holy orders) a certificate, signed with the name of the Rev. Philo Perry, which certificate was not written nor signed by him.

"That the conduct of the said Ammi Rogers in the State of Connecticut, during his residence in that State, since he left New-York, has been insulting, refractory, and schismatical in the highest degree; and, were it tolerated, would prove subversive of all order and discipline in the Church: and that the statement which he made in justification of his conduct, was a mere tissue of equivocation and evasion, and, of course, served rather to defeat than to establish his purpose.





"Therefore, This House do approve of the proceedings of the Church in Connecticut, in reproving the said Ammi Rogers, and prohibiting him from the performance of any ministerial duties within that Diocese; and, moreover, are of opinion, that he deserves a severe ecclesiastical censure, that of degradation from the Ministry."

By recurring to the Journals, you will find that the above is an impartial statement of facts, and that the following particulars undeniably result from it. Mr. Ammi Rogers brought this business before the house of Bishops, and, in the words of his memorial, declared, that "he never has shunned investigation, but on the contrary has always *requested* it, and *now* prays that a candid and impartial enquiry may be made as to his conduct and character."\* It appears that Mr. Rogers presented to the House his documents; that a full hearing of the case was at different times had in the presence of both parties; that Mr. Rogers confirmed the wish which he expressed for an enquiry, by always attending for the purpose: and it was not until the close of the enquiry, and until he had reason to fear the unfavorable result to himself, that he expressed to the Bishops that he did not wish them to come to any decision.

Now, as persons deeply interested for the peace of the Church and your spiritual welfare, we intreat your conscientious and serious attention to the following considerations. Can you suppose that if Mr. Rogers did not wish for any enquiry into his conduct by the House of Bishops, he would have permitted them to engage in it without entering his solemn protest against it? Can you suppose that the Right Rev. Bishop White, whose impartiality and mildness are so universally acknowledged; that Bishop Moore, who had been represented by Mr. Rogers as friendly to him; that Bishop Parker, who had just made his solemn vows at the altar, would have *forced* Mr. Rogers to an enquiry, if he had not solicited it, and would declare that they had made a *full enquiry* and *fair examination* of the subject, if such inquiry and examination had not been made? Can you suppose that these venerable Bishops of the Church would have violated every obligation of truth and justice, as well as the solemn vows of office, by condemning an innocent man? Could Mr. Rogers have had a trial before a more impartial tribunal? Or can you suppose that after the House of Bishops had made a full enquiry and pronounced their opinion, any thing else was left to the Bishop of Connecticut than to carry their decision into effect? Mr. Rogers made an appeal to the House of Bishops—they thought proper to investigate his conduct and to pronounce a decision. The Canons of the Church of Connecticut, in regard to the trial of Clergymen, could here have no operation. The Bishop of Connecticut was the agent to carry the decision of the House of Bishops into effect.

Mr. Ammi Rogers has been solemnly degraded from the Ministry, after a full investigation of his conduct, and a decision in regard to him by the highest authority of the Church. We intreat you as friends to the peace of society and the order and harmony of the Church; we intreat you by your characters as Churchmen, by the memory of your Fathers who cherished the Church with inviolable fidelity; we intreat you by the prospect of that awful tribunal at which all mankind must be judged, to regard the Apostolic injunction, "HEAR THE CHURCH." In the language of the Apostle, we exhort you, brethren, "*Put from you that unworthy person.*" Remember the declaration of our Lord, "*If any man refuse to hear the Church, let him be unto you as a heathen man and a publican.*" In the spirit of meekness and affection we intreat you, read not that divine body, the Church, which your Redeemer purchase<sup>d</sup> with his blood. For ourselves, we most solemnly declare, that mindful of the commission given to us by our Divine Master, and relying on his promise that he will be with his Church always, even to the end of the world, we shall esteem it our sacred duty to preserve inviolable the authority committed us.—And we trust that what is thus "done" by the lawful Governors of the Church "on earth will be ratified in Heaven."

*A true Copy of Record,*

ASHBEL BALDWIN, SECRETARY.

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\* The express words of the Memorial of Mr. Rogers to the House of Bishops, are—"He now prays that a candid and impartial enquiry may be made as to his conduct and character both as a minister and a man, giving him opportunity to hear the witness and answer for himself."



# SERMON,

PREACHED AT WATERBURY, (SALEM PARISH)

Dec. 2. A. L. 5808,

ON THE DEATH

OF

MR. ASAHEL LEWIS.

—ALSO—

AT DANBURY, JANUARY 10, 1809,

AT THE FUNERAL OF

JAMES CLARK, ESQ.

BY THE REV. DANIEL BURHANS, A. M.  
Rector of Trinity Church, Newtow.

..... It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment.  
HEB. IX. 27.



NEW-HAVEN,  
PRINTED BY BR. OLIVER STEELE.

1809.

TO  
THE MEMBERS  
OF THE  
ANCIENT AND HONORABLE SOCIETY  
OF  
Free and Accepted Masons,  
OF  
HARMONY LODGE, IN WATERBURY,  
THE FOLLOWING  
SERMON  
IS RESPECTFULLY  
INSCRIBED, BY  
THE AUTHOR

VOTED, That Brothers ISAAC BENHAM, ASAHIEL CHITTENDEN,  
and JARED BURN, be a Committee to present the thanks of this  
Lodge to Brother DANIEL BURHANS, for his Sermon delivered this  
day, and request a copy for publication.  
Copy of Record, HARRISON, Secretary.

HARMONY LODGE, Dec. 2, 5808.

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To the Reader.

.....

SOON after the following Sermon was preached upon the death of Mr. Lewis, the Author delivered it, with a few alterations, upon the death of JAMES CLARK, Esq. The paragraphs included in brackets were omitted, and the following Exordium, with the subjoined notes, were added.

By reading the Sermon without the notes, it will be as first delivered; and by omitting the included paragraphs, and reading the exordium and notes, it will be as delivered in Danbury.

The writer is induced to publish the Sermon in its present form, from the following circumstance. Soon after being delivered in Danbury, it was reported he had changed his religious sentiments, or preached contrary to the Bishop and Clergy of this Diocese. The reader is desired to compare the subject with the Articles and Rubrics of the Church of England, and those of the Protestant Episcopal Church; and it is presumed there will be found a happy uniformity, agreeable to that "faith once delivered to the saints."





A

## SERMON, &amp;c.

*My Christian Brethren,*

**I** MEET you on this solemn occasion as a fellow mourner, conscious of the loss that civil society has sustained—of the breach made in this parish, the loss of their first Warden; but more effectually experienced by the family, in the loss of husband and a father. Yea, and I have lost a confidential friend, and Masonry an affectionate brother. In all these various connections and relations, I sympathize with you.

Convinced that it is not (in many cases) useless to pass some eulogiums upon such characters as the deceased supported, I might justify myself, and am sure of an applauding public.

But, to an audience sufficiently acquainted with the integrity and uprightness with which he filled his several stations—and disinclined to subjects of this nature in general, and unqualified on the present occasion, I shall excuse myself by making a single remark: From the seat of judgment, as a civil magistrate, he is gone to the impartial bar of justice and mercy—From the service of the church militant, we hope, to the enjoyment of the church triumphant. And as it is the living, who may derive benefit from funeral discourses, (and not the dead) I shall improve the few moments allotted to me, in offer-

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ing the effusions of a sympathetic heart, sighing the welfare of immortal souls, in a discourse recently delivered on a similar occasion, from the following passage:

Amos iv. 12, 13.

*“Prepare to meet thy God, O Israel. For lo, he that formeth the mountains, and createth the wind, and declareth unto man what is his thought, that maketh the morning darkness, and treadeth upon the high places of the earth, the Lord, the God of Hosts is his name.”*

[WHY this admonition? Because the *Lord God of Hosts, who maketh the morning darkness*, hath sent forth his summons, and called from his labor, a brother—a brother, whose conjugal and parental affections endeared him to his family; whose filial respects soothed an aged parent; whose industry and uprightness rendered him a useful and an exemplary member of society: and whose munificent charity endeared him to the *Lodge*, to the poor and distressed.

This has assembled us at this time; not to rend open the avenues of affliction, but to shed the tributary tear over his ashes; not to open afresh, the still bleeding wounds of the widow and friends, but to console and sympathize; and while *mourning with those who mourn, to bind up the broken hearted*. Not to pore over the mementos of mortality, with unavailing sorrow; but from the death-head and the mangled corpse of a brother portrayed upon the carpet, turn our eyes to the never fading *sprigs of cassia*; emblems of immortality; assurances that our brother “but sleepeth;” that after the wintry blasts of death, the resurrection morn shall usher in the spring, that shall ever bloom in a summer’s glory, and afford autumnal fruit without frost; the true bread, that shall nourish unto everlasting life.]

Open, my brethren, the attentive and listening ear, while we endeavor to arouse the luke-warm to a consideration of the certainty of death; to direct the enquirer *what he should do to be saved*—and conclude, by pressing home upon your consciences, the admonition of our elder brother, who, in this death speaks to all, and to this Lodge in

particular—*be ye also ready*. Prepare to meet thy God, &c.

“Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return,” said the Almighty, in passing sentence upon fallen man. From Adam to Moses, from Moses to Christ, from Christ to the present, death has reigned universal conqueror. In every age we trace his fatal darts; in every country his destructive sword; yea, in almost every family, we hear lamentation and mourning.

Where are the antideluvians, who lived from three to nine hundred years? It is written, “and they died.”—Where are the mighty conquerors who rose in the east, and swayed their sceptres over millions? They have gone down in the west: on the *level* they slumber with their meanest soldiers: but few of their names only live in the historic page.

Yea, where are our fathers, that rejoiced with our mothers, that a child was born? who watched over our infant days; nurtured us in childhood, and shed tears of anxiety while we were treading the dangerous and beguiling paths of youth: Almost all have paid the debt of nature—have gone to “that country, *from whose bourne*, no traveller returns.” The few who are left, find their lives but labor and sorrow; and their whitened locks, striking indications of the shroud that must soon envelop them for the coffin and the tomb.

But hark, hark, hark! Who comes? methinks I hear the sound of my master’s feet behind me in the death of\* [our brother LEWIS, warning the young and the middle aged, to “prepare to meet God.”] Although the age of man is set at three score and ten, yet the bills of mortality point the age between 16 and 18, to be the average of human life. Go into the church-yard; read the inscriptions; take the *rule*, the *square* and the *plumb-line*; measure the graves of our sleeping friends, and you will find this statement correct. Here lies the infant that only lived to cheer the countenance, and then wring the hearts of bereaved parents; nipped in the bud, like the under grass by an untimely frost. There moulders the youth, like the flower of the field, beaten down by

\* JAMES CLARK, Esq. aged 65.





the violence of storms. Yonder \* [sacred deposit contains the remains of one, who but a few days past had the fairest prospect of life : his countenance the picture of health ; his bones moistened with marrow. His accounts are closed ; the expectation of his dear companion cut off ; and the dear babes, pledges of conjugal bliss, left fatherless. Ah ! the aged mother has lost a son on whom she leaned for support, while tottering "the down-hill of life." Methinks I hear renewed the heartfelt groanings of an aged Jacob, saying, "if I am bereaved of my children, I am bereaved." Or in the still more bitter lamentation of David—"O ! Absalom, my son, my son, would to God I had died for thee." O ! death, how dreadful, how universal are they spoils ! What then, I beseech you, my youngest, my most stout-hearted friends, is your security against the execution of this divine sentence, to which I am now endeavoring to call your most serious attention ? Examine the world at large ; look into your own neighborhood ; pry with the

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at *high-twelve*, or *sun-setting*, the "*scythe* shall cut some brittle thread of life ?"

Surely, he asketh no such questions : riches and honors have no bribes for his insatiable desires ; youth, or gaiety, health or beauty, have no power to disarm his severity ; parents can find no reprieve for their beloved children ; the most unsullied, the most undivided affection, cannot blunt the arrows of his malignant wrath. Nor can the mansions of pleasure point out to him the objects best suited for his avaricious wishes.\* No ! without one single exception of another's making, he levels his unresisted arrows, and all must fall before him ; the rich and the poor, the old and the young, the gay and the sorrowful : "The mountains become darkness ; he treadeth upon the high places of the earth"—the feet stumble upon the dark mountains ; the Lord of hosts commands." With this enemy there is no parley ; with this foe there is no putting off, even till to-morrow.—"There is no discharge in this war." Prepare then, O ! "dying mortals," to meet your God.

But why this preparation ? Because "it is not" only "appointed unto men once to die," but, "after death the judgment." "God hath appointed a day, in which he will judge the world in righteousness," when "every one shall receive according to that he hath done, whether it be good, or bad." We are, therefore, not only mortals, but we are sinners ; and have immortal souls, that shall never die. Those who are sensible of this ; who view themselves wandering in the dark, and are groping for the light, being "pricked at the heart," and ready to cry out, "what shall we do to be saved ?" to such I turn, with the more important part of my subject. And, O ! for the tongue of an angel to proclaim, "there is balm in Gilead ;" there is a "light that shall rise to the upright in darkness." I "have found a ransom ;" there is one, mighty to save : "his name is JESUS ;" because, "he came to save his people from their sins." Follow this leader in the way of his appointments, and fear no danger. He was proclaimed, at his first advent, [in this joyful season] by an angel. "Fear not, for behold, I bring you glad tidings of great joy, which shall

\* Even the power of earthly magistrates cannot ward off his dart.

most curious attention into the little circles of your families and friendships. Ask the families of the rich and honorable, with what sums, or with what titles they are able to bribe this universal ravager of our life's best felicities, whose [untimely] shafts we are now lamenting ? Ask the young, the gay, the beautiful, the healthy, and the strong, by what means they are provided against his sudden, his prepared and uncertain arrows ? Does he ask the anxious or the loving wife, when, or by what kind or gentle means he should deprive them of the best earthly felicity, the partner of their souls ? Does he ever proclaim through the circles of gaiety, or the mansions of pleasure, that on such an evening, he shall take from them such a number of their votaries, and that therefore they should consult amongst themselves whom they could best or most conveniently part with ? Does he proclaim to the Tyler, or the Master in the east, that at *sun-setting*,

\* Behold the yawning grave, made ready for his remains, which are placed here before the holy altar, to give vent to our sympathetic tears ; then to receive its sacred deposit in fast hold, till the archangel's trump in the last day shall awake the slumbering dead.

† See Inwood's Sermons.

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be unto you and all people." Look then to him, "as the author and finisher of faith." Repent, and obey his gospel ; then, with the "wondering shepherds," your sorrow and sighing will flee away." He will "open your lips," and your "mouth will show forth his praise," in joyful acclamations, saying, "Glory to God, in the highest, and on the earth, peace, good will towards men."—*Prepare then, to meet thy God, O ! Israel.* Remember we are sinners, God is holy, and "we have erred, and strayed from his ways like lost sheep." Consider the infallible lips of Jesus have said, "except ye repent, ye shall perish."

But it is greatly to be feared, that through the multiplying divisions among professing christians ; and that want of charity between the contending parties, many are "halting between two opinions ;" nay, may I not add between hundreds ; for the time has come when the saying of our Saviour is verified, "Lo, here is Christ, or lo, there." One cries, "he is in the secret chamber ;" another, "he is in the wilderness."\*

For this cause, many have fallen into a fashionable kind of religion ; like the Laodiceans, are "neither cold nor hot ;" and excuse themselves from this needful preparation, by saying, there are so many ways pointed out by different preachers, who all appeal to the bible, "I know not which way to go ; and as men can no more think alike than they can look alike, I am determined to give myself no further trouble ; for it will never be enquired at the day of judgment, to what sect I belonged." Hence that lukewarmness, so prevalent ; the neglect of sacraments, of family religion, and the means of grace in general. And may I not say, thousands in this enlightened community are growing in years, unbaptized ; out of covenant, and unconverted. Alas ! my brethren, is this to be prepared to meet a holy God ? who says, "My son, give me thine heart, and let thine eyes observe my ways." Is this to obey a merciful Saviour ? who has said, "Except a man be born of water and of the spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God"—"Except ye eat my flesh, and drink my blood, ye have no part in me ?"

\* Is not this prophecy fulfilled, in modern Class and Camp-meetings ? Christ says—"Go not after them."





But I stand not here on this solemn occasion to denounce sectarians, or answer the objections of casuists in modern divinity; but, to warn you of approaching danger; by preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ, "as once delivered to the Saints."

Nevertheless, suffer me just to remark, the Scriptures should not be read to select separate passages to prove a preconceived opinion; but with a teachable disposition, free from prejudice, to find out "the truth as it is in Jesus." Instead of bending them to our reason, (which at best is imperfect) we should submit our reason to the Scriptures, and then they will "make us wise unto salvation."

For the very reason that fallen men could never reason alike, God, in infinite mercy, gave them a rule by which their reason is to be governed. And because "it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps," God hath given him a path to walk in. This God has always done from the beginning. Hence, says our Saviour, "I am the way, and the truth and the life; no man cometh unto me but by the Father."\* To direct man in this way hath been the grand object in all the dispensations of providence to sinful men, who "love darkness rather than light." For this purpose St. John was sent into the wilderness to prepare the way, and to "bear witness of that light. That was the true light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world."† Therefore says Christ, "I am the true light of the world, he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."

After Christ ascended into heaven to continue the same way to the end of the world, he sent down the Holy Ghost upon his Apostles "to bring all things to their remembrance," to enable them to organize his Church, and send others as he had sent them, and by his influence to accompany the means he had instituted.

This is the "faith once delivered to the Saints"—the "ancient land-marks;" and, separated from "the doctrines and commandments of men," is plain and easy

† John i. 9.

\* John xiv. 6.

## 12

to be understood; consisting in "repentance towards God," and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ, and charity towards all men.

A practical improvement of these is that preparation so necessary to obtain eternal life.

Repentance is commenced by coming to ourselves like the prodigal, and seeing our souls starving for lack of knowledge, and to see the perishing need of a Saviour. Faith points out the father's house, where "there is bread enough, and to spare." Charity draws us with the bands of love, trembling and halting, until we meet the Father: who, if he finds us duly and fitly prepared, pennyless, poor, blind and naked, will embrace us in the arms of his mercy, bid us enter, and clothe and refresh us and grant us special grace "to walk in his commandments blameless."

The necessity of this repentance arises from our sinfulness, and the sinless nature of God.

Therefore the "glad tidings" of the Gospel were ushered in by the crier in the wilderness, "Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." The first exhortation of our Saviour\* was, "Repent, and believe the Gospel:" when he sent his disciples to preach, they went forth, "preaching that men should repent." And after his resurrection, he commanded that they should preach "repentance and remission of sins, through his name."† And thus we find St. Peter saying, "Repent, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out."‡ For this reason the sinner is spared, "that the goodness of God may lead him to repentance."

The necessity of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ arises not only from the sinfulness of man, and his total inability to save himself out of Christ; but from the unchangeable nature of God, who said, "in the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt die:" man broke this law, and nothing but death could fulfil it. Here, behold and wonder! The eternal Son of God assumed human nature, became our elder brother, and in that nature shed his blood, and made a full atonement for the sins of the whole world.‡

\* Mark i. 6. † Luke xxiv. 47. ‡ Acts iii. 19. § 1 John ii. 2.

## 13

God accepted this atonement, the assurance of which we have, "in his raising him from the dead." The application of Christ's merits is made to the sinner through faith and obedience; therefore said an Apostle, "Without faith, it is impossible to please him; for he that cometh to God, must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."\* The best deed ever performed by the best of men, must in degree be imperfect: therefore, nothing but faith which "operates by love" can render our best services acceptable in the sight of a perfect God. The only way to know whether our repentance and faith are evangelical and saving, is to examine our lives by God's holy word. By that we shall be judged at the last day, by that we should judge ourselves now. "Faith without works is dead, and works without faith are dead, being alone."

Charity consists in the love of God "shed abroad in the heart," by the influence of the holy spirit; "from whom all holy desires, all good counsels, and all just works do proceed." This charity "thinketh no evil, is not easily provoked"—it "envieth not"—it excites the heart by pure motives to pray and do good to all men, even our enemies—directs the hands to fill them with good things—directs the feet to run to the abodes of sickness and poverty—the widow and fatherless; it opens the lips to speak those kind words that doeth good like a medicine; and it distributes to their several necessities—it bridles the tongue against "lying, slandering, and evil speaking;" and closes the ear against evil reports.

Lastly, what crowns all, and without which all our pretensions to faith, repentance, charity and conversion, will be "like sounding brass and tinkling symbols,"—those who have injured us, we shall forgive; and to those we have injured, we shall not only confess our faults, but whereinsoever we have defrauded them, we shall make them restitution.

Whoever thinks he is converted and prepared for death without doing this, is in the "gall of bitterness and the bond of iniquity."—"He that confesseth and forsaketh

\* Heb. xi. 6.





his sin shall find mercy." "Behold," says Zacheus, "if I have taken any thing by false accusation, I restore him fourfold."\* "Christ will require his own with usury."

To be enabled thus to prepare, we should be instant in prayer and live in the daily use of the instituted means of grace, "without which we can do nothing." "Ask, and ye shall receive," said he who alone hath any thing to give. "Watch and pray—believe and be baptized," said he who instituted his Church as a preparatory school to instruct, lecture and meet in—fit and prepare us for his triumphant Church in heaven. By baptism we are initiated into this Church, and thereby become visible members of his mystical body. Should any doubt of this, let him read the following text of St. Paul, with other corresponding passages. "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ, there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female; for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."† Being thus made members by baptismal regeneration, we may derive nourishment from the head (i. e.) Christ, who, by a beautiful illustration, inculcates this great and glorious truth: "I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman.—Every branch in me that beareth not fruit, he taketh away; and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit."‡

In this way, through faith and repentance, we are to receive "special grace," viz. spiritual regeneration, or, as more correctly expressed in Titus iii. 5, *renewing of the Holy Ghost*. The continuance of this, or our growth in grace we are to expect in a faithful use of the other sacrament. "He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, him will I raise up at the last day."

I know that this is unpopular doctrine with those who have substituted feelings for conversion, and consider the sacraments of little or no use. And it is equally so with those who place morals in the room of faith and re-

\* Luke xix. 8.

† Gal. iii. 27, 29. Gen. xviii. 10—12. Rom. vi. 3. John iii. 3.

‡ John xv. 1, 2.

## 15

pentance. I say morals, for I fear there are many who flatter themselves they may be saved, because they are no worse than their wicked neighbors. I recommend to the first a serious attention of the fiftieth chapter of Isaiah, particularly the last verse; and to the latter the history of Cain, who would not shed blood.

Suffer then the word of exhortation, for while standing "between the dead and the living," and warning others to prepare to meet God, knowing that soon I must give an account of my stewardship, I must not "*speake false for God*," neither do I fear to preach as my Saviour and his Apostles preached. And could I be an instrument of bringing home one wandering sheep "to the true fold," I should consider it infinitely better than the applause of millions! Turn then to the strong hold, "ye prisoners of hope;" and let the saying of Christ to Nicodemus, and his commission to his Apostles\* have their desired effects upon your hearts, and you will not think any apology necessary on my part for the freedom in this discourse.

Have you then faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, or do you ask how to obtain it? The great Apostle to the Gentiles hath settled the whole controversy by saying, Rom. x. 17, "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."† "Search the Scriptures"—"they are spirit of life."

Are there here any unregenerate, out of covenant, and of course unprepared to meet God? O! hear your Saviour: "He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be damned." Hear the first sermon preached under the immediate operation of the Holy Ghost. What does Peter say to the enquiring multitude? Repent, and be baptized every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall

\* John iii. 5. Matt. xxviii.

† I beg liberty to earnestly recommend an *ESSAY ON FAITH* by John Rotherham, lately re-printed in New-Haven.

call."—Acts ii. 38, 39. And who does he call? He calls all from the rising to the setting sun. "Their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the end of the world.\* He calls you, my hearers, by mercies. He calls you by judgments; yea, he calls in the awful voice of death!

And could our departed brother speak from the eternal world, would he not say to this †[Lodge,] Prepare to meet thy God? Would he not say to his beloved wife, Prepare to follow me; for I shall no more console you in afflictions, nor rejoice with you in prosperity.—[My heart will no more beat in conjugal affection, anticipating the growth and prosperity of our dear children; give up yourselves to Jesus in the way of his appointments.]

But, my dear madam, I forbear; it is not my wish to excite your passions, but enlighten your understanding. I feel for you—yea, I experimentally sympathize with you. I have drank of the same bitter cup that none can know but by experience. Our Saviour, speaking of the marriage covenant, said, "and they twain shall be one flesh." Rending the body asunder, gives but a faint idea of separating husband and wife by death.

But, remember, "it is not an enemy who has done this;" it is that merciful parent, "who does not willingly afflict or grieve the children of men;" but "pitieth us as a father pitieth his children." This consideration silenced the tongue of one, "who could speak well."—"Aaron held his peace." David says, "Be still, and know it is God." "It is the Lord," says Samuel, let him do what seemeth good." Job, whose trials were uncommonly afflictive, says, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, and blessed be the name of the Lord." Therefore, with the weeping Mary, place yourself at the foot of the cross; lay your sorrows at the throne of grace, and look up "to Jesus, the author and finisher of faith." And, while you imitate him when weeping at the grave of a friend, imitate him when he lay in the agonizing garden—"not my will, but thine be done." Then, he who had compassion on a widow in the days of

\* See Mal. ii. and Rom. x. 18.

† Church.

## 16





his flesh, and restored her son to life, will have compassion on you; he will restore to your afflicted bosom, that which is better than earthly connections; "that peace of God, that passeth all understanding." He ever lives to make intercession for us. Look then beyond this cloud—he is now saying in his word, "I am the father of the fatherless, and the judge of the widow." We commend you to God's holy keeping,\* [and the friendship of this Lodge, trusting you will improve this dispensation to the glory of God, of and your spiritual and eternal good.]

My brethren, methinks I hear our dear brother speaking to this [Lodge]† in that solemn address appointed to be used on certain occasions.†

Here you view a striking instance of the uncertainty of life, and the vanity of all human pursuits. The last offices paid to the dead, are only useful, as they are lectures to the living "from us"—therefore you are to derive instruction, and ought to consider every solemnity of this kind, as a summons to prepare for your approaching dissolution.

Notwithstanding the mementos of mortality with which you daily meet; notwithstanding "you" are convinced that death has established his universal empire over all the ranks of nature; yet through some unaccountable infatuation, "you" are still apt to forget that "you" are born to die. "You" go on from one design

\* And the patronage and filial respect of your dear children, who have reason "to rejoice," even in affliction, that they were not left fatherless in infancy; but were guarded, directed, and protected through the dangers and dependencies of childhood.

Yea, my weeping friends, I commend, under God, this your afflicted mother to your care: As Jesus said to his beloved disciples, I say unto you, "Behold your mother." Comfort her concerning her trial, and ease her down the hill of life. As your earthly father is taken from you, look up to that Father of all mercies and God of all comfort.

Your age, your experience, your good sense, and connections, prevent the necessity of any further counsel. I only add, "may these afflictions work for you, an exceeding weight of glory."

† Church.

‡ The above address is principally taken from the Masonic Funeral Service.

to another, add hope to hope, and lay out plans for the subsistence and employment of many years to come; until "you" are suddenly alarmed with the approach of death, when "you" least "expected" him, and at an hour which "you" probably "concluded" to be the meridian of "your" existence.

What are all the externals of majesty, the pride of wealth, or charms of beauty, when nature has paid her just debt? If for a moment, "you" throw "your" eyes on the last scene, and view life, stripped of its ornaments and exposed in its natural meanness, "you" will then be convinced of the futility of its empty delusions. In the grave all fallacies are detected, all ranks are levelled, and all distinctions are done away.

While "you" drop the sympathetic tear over "my grave," let charity induce "you" to throw a veil over "my" foibles, whatever they have been; and withhold not your memory from the few virtues I have "performed." Suffer the apologies of human nature to plead in my behalf. Perfection has never been attained; the wisest, as well as the best of men have erred. Therefore imitate "my" virtues, and derive instruction from "my" weakness. Let "my" death excite "your" serious attention, and strengthen "your" resolutions of amendment. As life is uncertain, and all earthly pursuits are vain, no longer postpone the important means of preparing for eternity: But "my brethren," embrace the present moment, while time and opportunity offer, to provide with care against that great change, when the pleasures of this world shall cease to delight, and the reflections of a life spent in the exercise of piety and virtue, yield the only comfort and consolation.

Thus shall "your" expectations be not frustrated, nor will "you" be hurried, unprepared, into the presence of that all-wise and powerful judge, to whom the secrets of all hearts are known, and from whose dread tribunal no culprit can escape.

Finally, "my" brethren, support with propriety the character of "your" profession on every occasion, and advert to the nature of "your" engagements, and pursue with unwearied assiduity the sacred tenets of masonry.

With becoming reverence supplicate the divine grace, that "you" may secure the favor of that eternal Being, whose goodness and power know no bounds; and prosecute "your" journey without fear or apprehension, to that far distant country from whence no traveller returns. By the light of the divine countenance, "you" will pass without trembling, through those gloomy mansions where all things are forgotten; and at that great and tremendous day, when arraigned at the bar of *Divine Justice*, judgment shall be pronounced in "your" favor; "you" will receive the reward of "your" virtue, and acquire the possession of an immortal inheritance, where joys flow in one continual stream, and no mound can check its course. [And might he not add, "remember the widow and the widow's son." My brethren, knowing you will do this, I commend the afflicted family to your patronage and friendship.]

May the Lord prepare you, that when he comes in the east, to open the glory of the last day, you may rise to the life immortal—the key word being found, he who dwelt in the bush, and "opens the kingdom of heaven to all believers," receive you into the celestial *Lodge* above.]

And what is said unto you, I would say unto all, *Prepare to meet your God*, O! probationers! Hear the voice of the Son of God, and live. Shake off the deadly slumbers of carnal security. "Awake," and arise "from the dead, that Christ may give you light." God is speaking to all in this [awful] providence, reminding you of your own mortality, in the [sudden] death of one you all respected, and have reason to lament\* [as a useful member of society.] He has "made the morning darkness," and calls upon all to prepare to meet the Lord God of Hosts. Yes, he calls upon the youth to be not less ready. My young friends, take my admonitions upon the means of grace as the effusions of a heart that would warn you, that without faith, repentance, baptism, and evangelical obedience, you have no promise of eternal life: Your nimble steps, may soon lead you down to the silent mansions of the dead, where your "active limbs" will moulder into dust, and your souls return to that God

\* As a faithful and pious Warden in the Church, and a correct and useful magistrate.



who gave them, and who will sentence them to eternal happiness or misery, according to the preparation you shall make.

[To the middle aged, this death speaks in a language impossible of deception. Ye, whose mountain seems to stand strong, and who are blessed with a rising and promising family, look at yonder solitary tomb! reflect upon its contents! He who a few days past, in health and prosperity was enjoying the sweets of domestic happiness—what is he now? Look at that mourning circle, and tell me what assurance have you of long life. And suffer me to ask, with all the seriousness the subject requires, are you prepared? Have you devoted yourselves to God? Have you given up your children to the holy Jesus, in the way of his appointments? Do you live in the habitual exercise of prayer, and the other means of grace? Or are you going on in the way of sin and disobedience? If so eternal death is before you.—“Prepare then to meet God.”]

The aged Fathers and Mothers will indulge me, before I conclude, to ask, shall the age of \*[37] rush into the grave, and seventy, the age of man, bid defiance to its ravages? No, my respected friends, there is but a step between you and death. As monuments of God's sparing mercy, you are continued. Have you improved your talents? Are you prepared to meet your God? Your “morning has become darkness”—is your evening light? Have you a guide to lead you through the dark valley; a treasure “where moth and rust cannot corrupt, and where thieves cannot break through and steal.” If so, like a “shock of corn fully ripe,” you shall soon be gathered into the garner of God, and receive that heart-cheering welcome, “Come ye blessed children of my father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.”

May God Almighty bless you all, both brethren and strangers; may he enable you to be duly and fitly prepared, that when we quit this earthly tabernacle, we may be initiated into the GRAND LODGE of the Supreme Architect, the Lord of Hosts, to join the song of Moses and the Lamb forever and ever. AMEN.

• 67.

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moment to work out our salvation with fear and trembling, seeing we know not how soon the night cometh, when no man can work; and prosper Thou the work of our hands upon us—O prosper Thou our handy work; that when Thou, who art the final rewarder of all them who labor in thy vineyard, shall come to render unto every man according to his labor and his work, we may be found among the happy number who shall receive that pleasing invitation of “Come, ye children of my Father, enter ye into the joy of your Lord:” we beg it for Jesus' sake, who has commanded us when we pray to say, “Our Father,” &c.



## Prayer.

ALMIGHTY and everlasting God! who art always more ready to hear than we to pray, and who art accustomed to give more than either we desire or deserve; pour down upon us, at this time, the divine consolations of thy Holy Spirit; and be it also to us a spirit of wisdom and understanding. In thy hands are the spirits of all living, and in Thee alone we live, and move, and have our being. Thou givest, and Thou takest away. Thou doest what Thou pleasest in the heavens above and amongst the inhabitants of the earth. Be this our wisdom to know, that Thou art always in all Thy conduct, guided by infinite justice, wisdom and mercy. Give us therefore in all Thy judgments, the hearing ear and the understanding heart; and may it teach us the true lessons of meekness, resignation, and patience. Support the afflicted in every trial. And may the present dispensations extract the tear of friendly commiseration from every tender heart. Teach us all who survive these daily instances of mortality, the important value of being always prepared to meet our God. In the midst of life we are in death. Teach us, gracious Father, the uncertainty of all human dependencies; and may we spend the present moment, as if it were our last. Prepare us, O Lord, for all thy gracious intentions: if we live, may we live unto the Lord; if we die, may we fall asleep in Jesus; that whether living or dying, we may be thine forever. Sanctify this awful moment to the conversion of every heart; may the serious and important services in which we have been engaged, have a suitable impression upon every mind; may the aged read the certainty of death, and may the young read the uncertainty of life; and may we, one and all, be truly prepared to give that solemn account which we know not how soon we may be called to give. May pastors and people eagerly snatch the present



REV. DAVID HUGHES, D.D.





# S E R M O N,

DELIVERED AT

DANBURY AND RIDGEFIELD,

ON A

VISITATION,

BY THE

Right Reverend Abraham Jarvis,

BISHOP OF CONNECTICUT,

*Printed at the request of a number of the Members of those Churches*

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# S E R M O N.

ROMANS viii. 15th.

THE SPIRIT ITSELF BEARETH WITNESS WITH OUR SPIRIT.  
THAT WE ARE THE CHILDREN OF GOD.

THE Son of God came down from heaven, dwelt among us in our flesh, and, by offering himself a sacrifice on the cross, made an atonement for the sins of human kind. After he had arisen from the dead, he again ascended up to heaven, there to appear as an Advocate for us in the presence of God. Seated in that exalted office before the throne of God, and clothed with the plenitude of power to provide for, and govern, his Church on earth, he sent the Holy Spirit to abide with his apostles, and with all who should, through their preaching, believe in him and his Gospel. By this Holy Spirit, the apostles were enabled to declare the whole will of God concerning the salvation of mankind. They who believe and are baptized, are by the Spirit made the adopted sons of God; and if sons, then heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ. As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. In support of this truth, and for the consolation of the faithful, the Spirit also himself beareth witness. *The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the sons of God.*

The subject is solemn and interesting: It shall therefore be my endeavour to seek for a probable and fair solution of the two following inquiries:

- 1st. In what manner the Spirit of God beareth witness with the spirit of Christians, that they are the children of God.
- 2d. What is that hope or persuasion which this witness produceth in the minds of Christians.





The witness of the Holy Spirit to our condition as Christians, allows of no presumptive conceits, or working of human fancy. Here, that we may neither mock God nor deceive ourselves, we are bound to be cautious, and to think soberly as we ought to think. If we indulge our own fancies—if we divide the witnesses, and make the Spirit of God a single witness, and allege our inward sensations and feelings as proof, the spirit must be a false spirit, and the proof fallacious; because it is not the witness of which St. Paul speaks. Again; if we set up our own spirit by itself, for a distinct witness, the testimony in that case must be false, as it does not agree with the witness mentioned by the apostle. Every man who is able to read the language in which St. Paul wrote, may see that he uses a word which signifies a mutual concurrence of both witnesses, in one joint and united testimony. *The Spirit beareth witness with our spirit.* This cannot be understood of any immediate communication or act of the Holy Spirit on the human soul, whereby it becomes converted, and the man made an adopted child of God. Such an interpretation destroys the union asserted in the text, and makes the Holy Spirit cease to be a witness; and instead of a joint co-operation, one spirit is to be considered as doing an act, and the other as bearing the testimony to it: in other words, according to this construction, the soul that is converted is left to be the naked and solitary witness of its own conversion. The scripture, thus expounded, puts a matter of the highest concern upon the most slender and precarious footing. In a business of such moment, we may be allowed to recommend a due attention to those words of our blessed Saviour: "*If I bear witness of myself, my witness is not true.*" It is expedient then to inquire for that witness which is true, and on which the Spirit of God gives us full authority to rely.

From the scriptures of truth, the Christian derives the happy instruction of his filial relation to God. These scriptures teach us, that this new relation originates in us, by the operation of the Holy Spirit; the knowledge of which is not conveyed to our minds by any immediate or direct act; but we are to obtain it by a conclusion drawn from certain fruits and effects, given as infallible proofs, by which we are to know that the Holy Spirit dwelleth in us, and in this manner, as the author of all holiness,

accompanies and bears witness with our mind and conscience, that we are the sons of God.

In the 9th verse of this chapter, we read, "*If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.*" And in the 14th verse, "*As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.*" If, in order to belong to Christ, it is necessary to have his Spirit, it is as necessary for a man to know that he has the Spirit, as it is to know that he has Christ for a Saviour. From revelation he learns the one; by the same apostle, who tells us that how to know the other. Now the same apostle, who tells us that we must have this Spirit, gives us the signs and marks which always accompany, and are certain proofs that we possess and are led by it. "*The fruit of the Spirit is Love, Joy, Peace, Long-suffering, Gentleness, Goodness, Faith, Meekness, Temperance: against such there is no law.*" When, therefore, we find that these fruits do manifest themselves within us, we may draw the comfortable conclusion, that we are the sons of God; and although the conclusion is our own act, yet, as the arguments on which that conclusion is grounded, proceed from the Holy Spirit, he may with strict propriety be said to concur with our own mind and conscience, in attesting to the truth of it. In strict conformity with the rule of St. Paul, is that given us by St. John: "*Hereby we know that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit;*" chap. iv. 13th. In the 12th verse he says, "*If we love one another, God dwelleth in us.*" Here are two facts necessarily connected; and the truth of the former arises out of the certainty of the latter. We know that God dwelleth in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit; and we know that he hath given us the Spirit, from the love that we have one for another. Thus St. John tells you, that by the fruits, as described by St. Paul, you are to understand, or know, that you have the Spirit of Christ.

In reference to these fruits, which make men true disciples of Christ, and fit them for the kingdom of heaven, the Spirit is in scripture called God's earnest. "*Who hath given us the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts?*" 2 Cor. i. 22d. An earnest we all know to be a part of a promised price, and a pledge for the after payment of the whole sum. Thus, the Holy Spirit is given us as



an earnest; to assure us that in due time we shall receive from God whatsoever he hath promised; provided always, that we keep the earnest, and make a right use of it, and do not return it back to him, or provoke him to take it from us.

But the Spirit is represented not only as an earnest for further and future blessings; but also as the *seal* of God upon what hath been already granted. The expression is figurative, and alludes to the custom among men, of putting a seal upon their goods, to designate their owner, and to ascertain the property. The fruits of the Spirit, having this meaning affixed to them, become the standing evidence, whereby we are to know that we belong to, and are in favour with God. On this foundation, reason maintains its place, and its proper sphere of action. "Conscience, purged from sin through faith and the Spirit of holiness," becomes clothed with authority to declare our relation to our heavenly Father. "*My conscience*," says St. Paul, "*beareth me witness in the Holy Ghost.*" "*If*," says St. John, "*our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence towards God.*"

Let each one of us, then, in this manner, try the question for himself. Does his conscience bear him witness in the Holy Ghost, that God holds that supreme place in his heart, which he holds in creation? Does he love his neighbour in sincerity; and is he ever ready, in proportion to his ability, to do him good, and not evil? Can he forgive an enemy? Is he just and upright in all his dealings? Hath he taken up his cross, by denying the sinful lusts of the flesh? Does he not allow himself intentionally to speak what is false, or deliberately to commit any known sin? Is the religion of Christ to him an easy yoke, and a light burden? At all times, whether in prosperity or adversity, is it his delight, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, to make known his requests unto God? And under all the events of life, does he maintain a due sense of his dependence on God, and put his trust in him for help and relief?—In fine, while he feels the rod, does he look to the hand that appoints it? and when afflictions await him, does he endeavour to bear them with that submission which he owes to the will of God? These are the tests, as well as the genuine fruits of the Spirit, "from whom all holy desires, all good counsels, and all just works, do proceed." If these fruits come

from the heart, and are manifested by the tenor of our life, then will our conscience bear us witness in the Holy Ghost, that we are the sons of God.

Every pretension of this kind, founded upon claims different from this two-fold witness, must be mere presumption. All claims to the title of a child of God, that they may appear just, must rest upon their proper proofs; but no proofs, except those which God requires, are to be so considered, or with safety to be relied on. God hath appointed an outward visible act, to seal a covenant union with Christ, and our adoption as sons. "*As many as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ.*" By the outward visible act of baptism, he gives us a new, internal, and invisible character. This invisible character he requires us to maintain and render effectual, by outward and visible acts. "*Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven.*" "*If ye keep my commandments, then are ye my disciples indeed.*"

St. Paul, relating the foundation on which he built the peace, joy, and comfort of his mind, does not boast of his miraculous conversion; neither does he mention any secret instantaneous change wrought in him by the Holy Spirit. *Our rejoicing, says he, is this; the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world.* And elsewhere—*The life that I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God.* The testimony which his conscience bore to his integrity, and sincerity, and his manner of life, which was the fruit of the Spirit, were proofs to himself, and to others, that the Spirit dwelt in him, and that he was a good man; and thence arose the joy and peace of his mind.

The evidence he adduces, and the method he took to judge of his own condition, he recommends to every other Christian. *Let every man prove his own work, and then he shall have rejoicing in himself.* Here it is to be noted, that every man must have his *own work*; for he cannot prove what he has not got; and there must be a rule by which the work is to be proved; and that rule must be one common measure, to which every man





must bring his own work for proof. If, on trial, he finds his work agrees with the standard, then he shall have rejoicing in himself. Secret impulses, or any special transactions of the Spirit, it on the minds of individuals, for reasons known only to God, and for purposes discerned by infinite wisdom, even if allowed, affect not the argument; for they are the work of God, and not of man, and therefore not the work to be proved, for that is every man's *own* work. Now, if men compare their tempers and actions with the several marks and characters declared to be the fruits of the Spirit, and find them to agree, then their conscience will acquit, and give them satisfaction and consolation; and so shall every man have rejoicing, or that delight in himself, which a good conscience always affords.

On a point of such importance to the Christian professor, it may justly give confidence to the humble inquirer after divine truth, to find the voice of the Church adding a sanction to his construction of the holy scriptures. In her exhortation to the communion, evidently guided by the foregoing and other apostolic injunctions, she directs us, in order that we may come holy and clean to such a heavenly feast, in the marriage garment required by God in holy scripture, and be received as worthy partakers of that holy table; to search our consciences, and examine our lives and conversations by the rule of God's commandments. Thus does the Church, in union with the apostles, send us to the scriptures of truth, which reveal the fruits of the Spirit, that by them we may learn what manner of spirit we are of, and may try our work.

In the 7th chapter of this epistle, the apostle, speaking of men in their natural state, as sons of Adam, represents them as living captives and slaves to a law, or power, which indeed binds them over to death, but not as being totally dead; for with dead men there is an end of all law. The chapter which contains the text, begins with the declaration, that the redemption by Christ delivers us from the necessity of continuing under that captivity any longer. *The law of the Spirit of life, in Christ Jesus, hath made us free from the law of sin and death.* Through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, we are put under the direction of the Spirit. From the power of the Spirit, we derive strength

to obey the law of God. "The consequence of our being under the power of the Spirit, is thus stated: *that we walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit, ver. 4; that we mind the things of the Spirit, ver. 5; that we mortify the deeds of the body, ver. 13; that we are the sons of God, ver. 14; that we cry Abba, Father, ver. 15.* The three first particulars describe the deeds of the Spirit, and comprehend the Christian life. They are therefore the sure guide to resolve the question whether we are the children of God. To do the deeds of the Spirit, as we learn from the same instructor, is to act according to our mind or reason; for he had before said, that reason approved the things of God; and the things of the Spirit are the things of God. Seeing, then, that the Spirit co-operates with our reason in the great work of religion, it follows, that religion is what the apostle declares it to be, our *reasonable service*. Allow this to be the true character of the religion of Christ, and you must conceive it to be the office and work of his Spirit, to exalt and perfect reason, so that it may subdue the sinful lusts of the flesh. What reason alone cannot do, it is qualified for by the Spirit of God, who *worketh* with it, and gives power to will, and to do, according to his good pleasure. Now, if ye will know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, ye must begin with an unfeigned desire to do his will. Therefore, to look aright for the witness of the Spirit, ye must look into yourselves, and there expect it from the report of your own reason and conscience. Do ye, with St. Paul, keep under your body, and bring it into subjection? Are your passions and appetites corrected and ruled by reason, enlightened by the doctrine, and sanctioned by the laws of the Gospel? Does your conscience acquit you at the bar of your own reason? Have you that sense of duty and filial affection, that meekness and humility, which disposes you to go, as a child to a tender parent, and cry Abba, Father? These are signs and evidences of the Spirit, that cannot deceive, and you need not mistake.

When God himself has given you the evidence, whereby you may know that his Spirit is in you of a truth; why should you desire, or why should you seek for any other?

"Hence it appears, that the evidence of the Spirit is not any secret inspiration, or any assurance conveyed to the mind of





"the faithful; but it is the evidence of works, such as by the Spirit we perform. And therefore, the only sign of sanctification, is holiness; and the only mark of grace, is to obey from the heart the word of God." \*

Do we meet with persons who say they have received the Spirit; that they are converted, and know themselves to be the children of God? We ask for the evidence given by the Spirit himself, as the signs of his presence in the hearts of men, by which it should be known who are governed and sanctified by him. Jesus did not require that men should believe that he was the Christ, only because he said he was. "If ye believe not me, believe the works that I do; for they testify of me."—John sent his disciples to inquire, "Art thou he that should come?" Jesus replied, "Go and tell John the things that ye hear and see." The prophets had foretold what the Messiah should do when he came: To those works Jesus appeals, and leaves them to compare what they saw with prophetic description, and to draw the conclusion for themselves. The miracles that Jesus wrought were sufficient to prove him to be a Teacher come from God; but no miracles, except those the prophets had foretold, could have proved him to be the Messiah. In the instance above cited, we see our Lord answered those who came to inquire of him whether he was the Christ, by an appeal to his works; those very works the prophets had foretold the Christ, when he came, should perform. In the same manner, all who receive him as their Saviour, are to prove their relation to him, and their title to his promises. Having a true faith, that faith they must manifest by those works which Christ himself hath declared to be the genuine fruits of faith, and to proceed from his Spirit. Those works show the law of Christ to be written in the heart; they show the doer of them to be his true disciple, who with the heart believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth maketh confession unto salvation. Placing our claims and Christian character on this footing, the evidence rises beyond any presumptive assertion of our own; and stands upon the high authority of Christ, and of the Spirit himself speaking to us in his Gospel. Guided by that authority, the more clearly

the subject is investigated, the more truly will it appear that the agency of the Holy Spirit is a joint act with human endeavour, and conducts men in the Christian life by the fixed rules of the Gospel. Viewed in this light, he is the *Spirit of Truth*; by his gentle, yet continual influences, disposing our minds and opening our hearts to attend to the word of God, as he did the heart of Lydia to attend to the words spoken of Paul. He excites us to listen to the scriptures, at first given by him, as he did Cornelius and his company, who stood before God to hear from Peter all things that are commanded of God. He is our *Comforter*, by cleansing the thoughts of our hearts, and inclining us to perform the various duties required; and strengthening us with steadfast confidence to pursue the course of life the Gospel points out. Thus, through him, we attain to that conversation which becometh the Gospel of Christ, and are finally made such as we should be in all holy conversation and godliness.

We may now inquire into the degree of hope or persuasion, which the witness of the Spirit truly produces and authorizes in the Christian, with respect to his final salvation.

On this point an admired writer of the present day is so clear and home to my purpose, it must be for your advantage to give you his thoughts in his own words. "The Christian, who would travel surely in the road to heaven, must steer equally clear of *self-confidence* on the one hand, and of *vain dependence* on the other. From the consideration, that the Christian dispensation is a covenant of grace on the part of God, and that every covenant, from its nature, implies conditions, conditions of entering into it, and conditions of continuing in it; it necessarily follows, that the acquisition of the benefits contained under the Christian covenant, must depend on the fulfilment of the conditions which have been annexed to it. When the Christian dis- ciple, therefore, talks of what the grace of God has done for his soul, he should at the same time examine how far that grace has produced its intended effect on his conduct, by enabling him to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world. According to his conclusion on this subject, admitting it to be justly drawn, must be his encouragement to look forward in hope to the glorious ap-



pearing of the great God and his Saviour Jesus Christ ; on this most settled conviction, that the objects of Christ's coming was not only to die for sin, and thereby purchase salvation for the sinner, but also to prepare the sinner for the salvation purchased, by making him meet, through the sanctification of his Spirit, to be a partaker of the saints in light."

Such, my Brethren, is the Gospel which we preach. Examine it by your Bible, and you will find that it contains the words of truth and soberness. "*He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.*"

Every true member of the Church militant is in a state of progression towards the Church triumphant. Such as is the state of the Church in this world, such must be the state of every one who belongs to it. The militant state is a state of trial and probation ; to which, humble trust, with a mixture of doubts and fears, must ever be attached. Assurance can only be the privilege of those, who, having passed their state of probation, are admitted into the Church triumphant. Whoever, therefore, asserts that he has arrived to a state of assurance, his assertion implies that he does not belong to the militant, but to that Church which is composed of the spirits of just men made perfect. When the victory is won, what remains but to enjoy the promised reward ? Every person who claims this high character, to be consistent with himself and the tenet he holds, must dismiss the exhortations to *grow in grace*, and to *perfect holiness in the fear of God*, as not pertinent to him. For why should he seek to grow, who is already assured that he has attained his full stature ? And of whom or of what can he be afraid, who, by the irresistible operation of the Spirit, has the decree of God irrevocably stamped upon him ? At the point where assurance of a future event begins, for that event probation ends.

Arguments of this kind, I am sensible, will not be seen, nor the force of them felt, by persons who are accustomed to combine things that are opposite, and to hold themselves blind to the most glaring contradictions. The same is to be expected from those who do not and will not understand the nature of the Christian Church ; who have no regular notions of the manner

in which Christ holds communion with it, and as the Head and King rules and governs it. Be it allowed, that human reasoning is fallible, and often inconclusive ; but the word of Christ is spirit and truth ; and where the word of a king is, there is power. Let us then have recourse to God and the word of his grace.

"Watch and pray ; for ye know not the hour wherein the Son of Man cometh." The exhortation is general, and may be applied to every man ; from which duty, no supposed condition can exempt him to the end of life ; for that is the period to which our Lord assigns the reward. "Blessed is that servant, whom his Lord, when he cometh, shall find so doing." "To him that overcometh, will I give of the tree of life in the midst of the paradise of God."

We do not find that St. Paul, notwithstanding his divine raptures and visions, speaks of them as giving him such a certainty of heaven, that he could not forfeit, or finally miss of it. On all occasions he utters a very different language. "I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a cast-away." "Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended ; but this one thing I do ; forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Let us, therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded." Such is the account St. Paul gives of his own manner of life. To the like conduct he exhorts all Christians, even the most perfect. The prize is at the end of the race : towards that we are, like him, to press, and in no one stage of the course to boast of security, or think the victory is won, until we arrive at the mark. Faith and hope are the great springs of action in the Christian warfare. These two are the shield and the helmet with which we must fight the good fight, and lay hold on eternal life. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath begotten us again to a lively hope by the resurrection.

The relation recorded in the 27th of the Acts, of St. Paul's voyage to Rome, affords an illustration of the highest degree of assurance the word of God will warrant, under any circum-





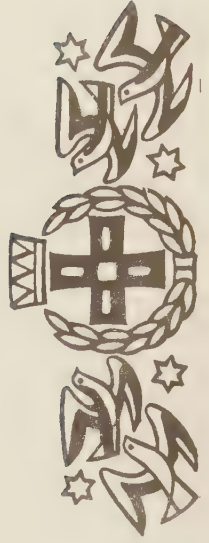
stance, to be imagined. The apostle was forewarned of the shipwreck. "Sirs," said he to the men who were with him, "be of good cheer; for there shall be no loss of any man's life among you, but of the ship: For there stood by me, this night, an angel of the Lord, whose I am, and whom I serve, saying, Thou must be brought before Cæsar; and lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee.—I believe God that it shall be even as it was told me." Afterwards, in the critical hour of peril, when the shipmen were about to leave the ship, Paul said to the centurion and to the soldiers, "Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved." Had the purpose of God been without conditions; had it been, according to that purpose, impossible for the men to have left the ship, St. Paul's assertion had been without meaning, or not true; his fears had been groundless, and his warning superfluous. More than an angel hath informed us of the salvation God hath appointed; and as we perform the conditions, and attain to the qualifications prescribed, the Spirit witnesseth with our conscience that we are the heirs of grace, and are in favour with God. The exceeding great and precious promises of the Gospel now stand by us as the angel did by Paul; and if we abide steadfastly within our place and station, and strive for the preservation of life, within the limits and according to the spirit of the promises, we shall be saved. Assurance relates to the promises; for they are certain.

Hope is excited by a firm faith, and belongs to us, while the great and final blessings exist in promises. Assurance, so long as we are in a state of probation, cannot transcend the nature and limits of that state; and therefore, when applied to the human mind, to express its prospect of eternal life, cannot go beyond hope, nor be divided from faith and hope, until the Christian arrives to that state, where faith and hope shall have an end. In this world, the highest attainment in the Christian life, is the full assurance of hope; and a strong consolation is the encouragement given as a reward to those who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before them: "*Which hope we have as an anchor, to which our soul is fastened in this stormy sea of life, both strong and steadfast, because fixed into the place within the veil; that is, into heaven, whither we shall be drawn by this anchor, as ships are drawn to the place where their anchors are fixed.*"

Recorded saints lived by faith, and are said to have died in faith. That faith, which is "the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen," sustained them under every trial. Animated by a lively hope, they regarded the afflictions they endured but light and momentary, and as working out for them "a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." With this armour they triumphed even in death, and were crowned with glory.

The exhortation left for us, is, to be followers of them, "who through faith and patience inherit the promises." Patience in well-doing worketh experience, and experience hope; but hope gives us no absolute certainty of salvation: Certainty, in whatever great presumption to talk of security. Certainty, in whatever degree it may be supposed, can only relate to our present condition, which is enough to keep our minds easy and contented. Other certainty than this, might make us remiss: This may encourage us to run with patience the race that is before us, and to labour in the Lord; knowing that our labour shall not be in vain.

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*The Divine Institution and Perpetuity  
of the Christian Priesthood.*

A

# SERMON,

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

## CONVENTION

OF THE

CLERGY AND LAY DELEGATES

OF THE

Episcopal Church

IN THE

STATE OF CONNECTICUT,

IN

CHRIST CHURCH, STRATFORD,

ON THE SECOND DAY OF JUNE, 1813:

OCCASIONED BY THE DEATH OF THE

Right Rev. ABRAHAM JARVIS, D. D.

Bishop of Connecticut.

By TILLOTSON BRONSON,

Principal of the Episcopal Academy.

NEW-HAVEN:

PRINTED BY OLIVER STEELES.

1813.

# SERMON.

IN the course of Divine Providence, that portion of the Church here assembled in convention, has been lately deprived of its visible head. Our late venerable Diocesan has received that summons, which all must obey, and is gone from this to the world of spirits.—His sacred office is vacant. He will no more preside in this body. His seat is left to be filled by another. Under the immediate view of such an event, it becomes all seriously to reflect on the ways of God, in his government of the Church, during its continuance in this transitory state.

Especially should we, my Brethren of the Clergy, be deeply reminded of the solemn vows we made at our ordination; and resolve before God to feed the flock committed to our care, with the sincere milk of his word; and neglect not to stir up the gift that is in us, by the laying on of hands.\* This gift many of you received through the instrumentality of those hands, which have been lately consigned to the tomb, and are mouldering into dust. Though they have ceased any more to perform the sacred rite, yet should they be active through you, in the spiritual work, to which you are called, in repairing the waste places of Zion. And that we all may be excited, in our several stations, understandingly to engage in this great

\* 2 Tim. i. 6.

AT a Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church of Connecticut, holden at Stratford, on the first Wednesday of June, 1813:

Resolved, That the Rev. Charles Seabury, and Mr. Charles Sigourney, return the thanks of this Convention, to the Rev. Tillotson Bronson, for his Sermon, delivered before them, at the opening of the session, and request a copy of the same for publication.

A true copy of record.

ASHBEL BALDWIN, Secretary.



SORROW IS BUT  
THE GUEST  
OF A NIGHT,  
AND JOY  
COMES IN THE  
MORNING



work, I propose calling your attention to the words of Inspiration recorded in

HEBREWS VII. 15th, 16th and 17th verses.

*And it is yet far more evident, for that after the similitude of Melchisedec there ariseth another Priest, who is made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life. For he testifieth, Thou art a Priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedec.*

The prominent object discernible through the whole of this epistle is, to show, that the law of Moses, and consequently the Aaronic priesthood, were types and shadows of better and more enduring things to come, and that, of course, they were to be superseded and done away, when the Messiah, to whom they pointed, should appear in the flesh. And this seventh chapter is wholly dedicated to the Priesthood: in which the Apostle argues, that as Levi, when in the loins of his progenitor Abraham, paid tythes to Melchisedec, his priesthood must have been of a subordinate grade; for, says he, *without all contradiction, the less is blessed of the better.\** He then proceeds to argue, from the uniform tenor of prophecy, that our Lord was to spring from the tribe of Judah; of which tribe there is no mention made, in the law, of any to serve at the altar: Consequently, as the Messiah was to be the great High Priest over all, the law, and all its appointments, must have been intended by divine wisdom to be temporary. To which argument he subjoins the text; *And it is yet far more evident; for that, or rather, as it should have been rendered, if, after the similitude of Melchisedec, there ariseth another Priest, who is made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life.* If, from the constant testimony of prophecy, there was to arise another priesthood, from a source not noticed in the law, then certain it is, that those men made priests by the law, were not to have per-

Heb. vii. 7.

petual succession: there was to be a change both of the law, and of the priesthood; since both are intimately united. And that such is the language of prophecy, in the last words of the text, he cites the 110th Psalm; *Thou art a Priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedec.\**

Who this Melchisedec was, commentators have not been agreed. But when we consider, that in the patriarchal state, the priesthood descended by primogeniture from father to son, the better opinion seems to be, that he was the nearest first-born from Adam; and thus the high priest over all. Perhaps he may have been the grandson of Noah. And when he met Abraham, and received tythes of him, he transferred his office to that patriarch, for temporary purposes; in whom, and his posterity, it was to continue, until He, who was the first-born of all things, the eternal Son of God, should come in the flesh, and visibly commence his everlasting Priesthood among men.

True it is, the Apostle tells us, he was *without father, without mother, without descent; having neither beginning of days, nor end of life.†* Yet the marginal rendering has it, *without pedigree:* "That is, (say the translators,) "the line of his family is not mentioned, neither his birth, nor his death."

If this gloss should not be deemed satisfactory, as a type of Christ, and holding the everlasting priesthood transmitted to him, to be handed to another, and thus never to have an end; all that is said of him, in the text rendering, is true. *Priest of the Most High God,‡* he certainly was, as we are told in Genesis: and we have the authority of the Prophets and Apostles to determine, that Christ the Lord came into the world, *a Priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedec.*

The substance of the argument in this chapter, may then be thus summed up: The everlasting priesthood of Melchisedec was transferred, temporarily,

\* Psalm cx. 4.

† Heb. vii. 5.

‡ Gen. xiv. 18.

from him to Abraham; thence to Levi, to Aaron and his sons; and so on, down to the time of Messiah, in whom it was reinvested, there to continue to the end of the world. When to this we add the words of our Lord to his Apostles, *As my Father hath sent me, so send I you,\** we come to this important conclusion, on which I shall first enlarge,

I. That there always was, and ever will be, a visible priesthood, a divinely instituted order of men in the Church.

II. And since mere men *cannot continue, by reason of death,†* the office must be transmitted to ages and generations, by succession; for which God in his wisdom has made provision.

I. Every organized society of men, for whatever purpose intended, requires some to preside and govern, and others to obey. That the Church is such a society, is certain. Nor is it less clear, that the authority alone which institutes, can rightfully appoint the grades of office, and the manner in which they are to execute their powers. Such is the uniform understanding of all men. If then the Church be a divine institution, the Priesthood is equally so.

Let us then inquire, from the records of inspired truth, how this matter stands. On this point, the history of God's dispensations to men, will afford us the best lights from whence to reason. To this, of course, I shall confine myself, in discoursing on this head. God, having created man, breathed into him the breath of life, endowed him with a reasonable soul, capable of knowing and worshipping him, and invested him with immortality; he placed him in the blissful garden of Eden, where he held communion and converse with his Maker, and enjoyed the fruit of the tree of life. And had man continued faithful to the divine command, we have every reason to believe the whole race, in union and fellowship, would here have continued to partake of the divine presence, vis-

\* John xx. 21.

† Heb. vii. 23.





ibly displayed, not as since, by signs and symbols, but in reality. Here would have been a blessed Church state, without schisms and divisions. Here was a divine institution, the tree of life, as a bond of union between man and man, and between God and man.

As man was formed with faculties far superior to all other creatures on earth; to be the lord and sovereign of all; and partaking of the spiritual nature of God; it was fitting, God should specially institute the kind of society he was to enjoy, and the manner in which it was to be preserved. This we have seen he did do, for our first parents; constituting them a church or spiritual community; himself being the head and governor. What kind of visible power, or whether any, was lodged with man, in this state of the Church, it is idle to inquire, since the word of God has left us no hint on this subject. Its continuance was short. Man rebelled. A new state followed. A mediator became necessary between God and man; for man had lost the image of God, and was become incapable of enjoying that church fellowship, for which he was formed. Still he was a social being—still he might be restored to communion with God, in fellowship with his brethren. The Son of God undertook the task, became surety for the atonement, and brought man back to his God. And how? By the new erection of a Church, bound together with holy rites and ordinances, with sacrifices and offerings. Now indeed we find power lodged in the hands of men to govern and administer. The patriarchs were God's ministers, in sacred things. And in process of time, when schisms had arisen, and corruption prevailed, the Church was confined to the Ark, in which Noah and his family were saved.

But few centuries elapsed, before the same dismal consequences followed. Abraham was now called, and set apart, by the superadded rite of circumcision. To him and his posterity the Church was confined. And when that posterity had become numerous, Moses was called to be a ruler and governor in civil matters, and Aaron in sacred. The priesthood was specially

arranged; and all the holy offices designated. High-Priest, Priest, and Levite, had their grades of power assigned. I need not stop here to prove, that all this was done by the immediate appointment of God. It is too plain in scripture to need illustration. It is what all acknowledge, who admit divine revelation. God was, then, the founder of the ancient Church of Israel. And nothing that he established, might be altered or abolished by men.

If such was his conduct towards men, before the coming of the Messiah, we might well argue that such it would be after his advent; for he is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever—his counsels are everlasting—his Church must be always the same thing in essence, varying only in non-essentials, in external rites, or in extent. Was he once the founder, he must ever be so; and man has no right to do less or more in these matters, to add or to retrench. The bounds are set; and we must not think to pass them, but under the penalty of rebellion, the heinous sin of Korah.

What we thus may argue from the institution of the patriarchal and Jewish Church, we find actually confirmed by what the Son of God did, when he came in the flesh. For he appointed officers of different grades under himself; with different powers and functions, answering to those under the law of Moses. He left not this to be regulated by the wisdom, or caprice of men. No: We find the Twelve Apostles with one kind of office, and the Seventy with another subordinate: emanating from the same source, his own will. We find him instituting holy rites, as a bond of union to the Church, like those under the patriarchal and Mosaic state. And finally, when about to leave the world, he gave a solemn commission to the Apostles, investing them with supreme power in ample form, *As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you—Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature—Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted; and whose soever sins ye retain,*

*they are retained.\** In pursuance of this high authority, they went forth and preached. They appointed others, as their Master had appointed them; and thus established the Church by divine power. What they established, man has no right to alter. Thus the whole tenor of Scripture, the history of all God's dispensations from beginning to end, conspires to prove that God is the founder of the Church. And all this is in perfect conformity with the reason of man, and the nature of the case.

But the divine institution of the Priesthood rests not alone on this argument. It results from the reason of the thing itself; from the end and design of the Church; and from the duties to be discharged by the sacred office. The ministers of Christ are styled *Embassadors for Christ*.† Now none but the Sovereign, who sends, and in whose name they act, has a right to appoint ambassadors. They are to publish and proclaim to sinful men, terms of peace and reconciliation with God; and therefore must have authority from him so to do. They are to apply, in his name, the seals of the covenant of grace, and therefore must be empowered by him, or their acts cannot be authentic. Without such commission, they would be forgeries of the name and authority of God. The Church is designed to promote spiritual harmony and union between man and man, and between man and his Maker—to be the means of nourishing the spiritual life of the soul, by the instrumentality of sacred rites and ordinances: And surely, none save God has a right to appoint such ordinances, and authorize those who are to administer them.

The gifts and graces of his Holy Spirit are in his own keeping, and he may dispense them as he will. Man has no choice, but to comply with the terms, and use the appointed means, in faith unfeigned: and God will own and bless his appointments, with growth in grace, and in holiness of life. In short, visible external ordinances, as means of grace, di-

\* John xx. 21, 22. Mark xvi. 16.

† 2 Cor. v. 20.





vinely appointed, obviously imply the divine appointment of those who are to administer. Divine institutions administered by the authority of man, is an absurdity; or rather, perhaps we may say, an impossibility. So far as they are of man, they are not from God; and therefore not to be styled divine. So long as we continue in the present state, external ordinances are congenial to our nature. Consisting of soul and body, both are dependent on God for support. Both are therefore bound to express that dependence; to be employed in his service, in rendering praise to his name. This the body can do only by external acts; those acts which God has appointed under the administration of his Church, in which the Priesthood takes an essential part.

But whatever may be thought of the reason of the thing, certain it is, all states of religion, authorized by God, have contained visible ordinances. The tree of life in Paradise, sacrifice with the patriarchs and Israelites, and the eucharist under the Gospel, are so many examples of what is here advanced. Not that we are to believe divine ordinances operate any other way, than by being accompanied with faith in the receiver; but that thus God has chosen to communicate the influences of his Holy Spirit; to plant and nourish the seeds of divine grace in the heart; and to support the spiritual life of the soul. Such appears to be his will, by his having always authorized external ordinances; and with this we should be satisfied. And thus, in every view, a divinely instituted Priesthood solicits our faith.

II. We are now to show, that as mere men cannot continue, by reason of death, God, in his wisdom, has provided for the transmission of the office, by succession from generation to generation.

As, under the former head, we have argued the divine origin of the Priesthood, from that of the Church; so here, from the perpetuity of the Church, we may, with equal security, argue a succession in the ministry. Men are evanescent beings, in regard to the things of time, the present state of the Church.

They come up here for a short time, and disappear. One generation flies away, and another takes its place. If, then, God's institutions are perpetual, he must have provided for transmitting the sacred office from one to another. It is not reasonable to think, he should have left a thing of so much importance, to be ordered by the caprices of men. It has been already remarked, that the Church was always the same in substance, varying only in non-essential forms, in the manner of ordinances, and in the succession of the priesthood. It began in Paradise—was not demolished by the fall. It continued with the patriarchs—rode above the flood with Noah—Under Abraham, Moses and the law, underwent little other change, than a transfer of the Priesthood from the first-born to a succession, by immediate designation in the tribe of Levi; and for the High-Priesthood, to Aaron and his sons. And when Christ came, little more was done, than to open its doors to all nations.

Had we then no assurance that it should not fail, we well might argue it would not, but with the world itself. Having survived so many changes, well might we conclude it was founded on a rock sure and steadfast.

To this effect, the Prophets of the Old Testament are full of predictions, when they speak of the Kingdom of Messiah, of the extent and duration of his kingdom. To David was the promise made, that his royal house should not fail for ever; that he *should not want a Man to sit on his throne*; \* which can be understood of no other than Christ the Saviour; who, in the line of his human nature, was descended of David, and now reigns over his Church. Isaiah, in predicting his birth, says, *His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace, there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it, with justice, and with judgment, from henceforth even for ever.*† And the prophet Daniel concludes the re-

\* 1 Kings ix. 5.

† Isaiah ix. 6, 7.

markable vision, which he had, of the four great beasts, prefiguring all the great temporal Kingdoms of the world, with the assurance, that *the Kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the Kingdom, under the whole heaven, shall be given to the Saints of the Most High; whose Kingdom is an everlasting Kingdom; and all dominions shall serve and obey him.*\* With such predictions as these before us, from the Spirit of eternal truth, well may we look forward to the universal triumph of the Gospel over the whole earth. We know, that since the gate of Zion has been set open to all nations; since the Church of God has been offered to the Gentiles, under the visible reign of Messiah, *the mountain of the Lord's house has been established in the tops of the mountains, and all nations have flowed into it.*† It has increased, it is increasing, and will continue to increase, until it embrace the whole progeny of Adam. Living in the age we do, at this distance of time from the commencement of the Church Christian; witnessing the conflicts she has had to encounter, from open foes without, and traitors within, corrupting the pure fountain of truth; yet still triumphant, and spreading wide her tent in the four quarters of the globe; offering the bread of life to perishing Heathens; we may well adopt the glowing language of an emirent Father of the Church, and triumphantly say, "Invaded by war, she conquers.—Surrounded with treason, she extricates herself.—Corrupted, she recovers, and shines the brighter.—Wounded, she falls not under her wounds.—Tossed by the waves, she sinks not.—Beaten by the storm, she suffers not shipwreck.—Waxing in years, she decays not.—She wrestles, and is not vanquished."‡

In the faithful page of History, we have seen the Church survive the persecutions of Pagan Rome, extricate herself from numerous early heresies, rise in renewed splendor from the corruptions of papal Rome; and is at this hour rapidly extending herself among

\* Daniel vii. 27.

† Isaiah lii. 2.

‡ St. Chrysostom.





the Heathens. Shall we then doubt but that she will shake off the heresies and divisions, with which she is now infested, and shine with more than pristine brightness, in the latter day glory? God has promised, and his word shall not fail. He will cause even the wrath of man to praise him; and the remainder thereof he will restrain.\* He will do all his pleasure.† His promise is, *On this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.*‡ All his promises are yea and Amen; for he changeth not. What he promises he is able to fulfil, and his truth faileth not.

Thus no one declaration in the word of God, is more certainly announced, than the perpetuity and universality of the Church: that it shall spread wherever human nature is found, and end only with time. When such glorious things are predicted of the Church, they must be understood of that society founded by God, which we have seen, of necessity, includes a divinely instituted Priesthood. For this we may rest assured, God, in his wisdom, has made provision. And this could be done only by a constant succession of miracles, to attest the divinity of the appointment; or by an orderly transmission from age to age, by the hand of man. But miracles, by becoming too common, would cease to be miracles, and amount to no evidence. Succession therefore by the hand of man, so far as we can see, is the only mode consistent with the nature of the case. And of this we have ample testimony in the word of God.

When he who *remaineth a Priest forever*, came into the world, to make propitiation for sin, and was about returning to his Father, he said to his Apostles, as we have seen, *As my Father hath sent me, so send I you.* And how did his Father send him? Certainly to send others, or he would not have sent them.—Certainly he sent them as ambassadors in his name, to proclaim the glad tidings of the Gospel, or he would

\* Psalm lxxvi. 10.

† Isaiah xlii. 28.

‡ Mat. xvi. 18.

not have said to them, *Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature*—Certainly to prescribe the terms of Salvation, or he would not have said to them, *He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved, but he that believeth not, shall be damned*—Certainly, as Priests to apply the seals of the covenant of grace and pardon, or he would not have said to them, *Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted, and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained*—Certainly to send others, and thus continue the succession, or he would not have sent them, as he was himself sent.

But here a question has been raised. Were all, whom he and the Apostles sent, of the same grade? Were all equally empowered to send others? It is readily admitted, that so far as the words of the commission go, there is no distinction. But in the subsequent history and writings of the Apostles, we find a wide distinction: we find them establishing different grades in the Priesthood. Some had power to administer the seals of the Covenant, Baptism and the Eucharist; and to feed the flock of God,\* without commission to send others: while some, as Timothy and Titus, are treated as having authority to appoint others; to ordain and govern the Elders of the Church. Surely the Apostles understood their own commission. What they did in this matter, they did by divine warrant; and therefore it is of equal authority, with what was done and ordered by Christ himself.

To this we may add, that all primitive Christianity, all those who had the best means of knowing what was the apostolical practice, so understood, and so practised. They, who at first were styled Apostles, and afterwards Bishops, and they only, ordained. And this continued to be the faith and practice of all, claiming to be Christians, until quite modern times. With such evidence, reasonable and well informed minds should be satisfied.

Thus does it appear, that God, in his wisdom, has made provision for the continuance of his Church, and of a divinely instituted Ministry, that *he may gather*

\* 1 Peter v. 2.

together in one, all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth.\*—And to purify us to himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.† Men may die, but the sacred office lives. The foundation standeth sure.—The Lord knoweth them that are his.‡ Under the protection of his Providence, and by the guidance of his Holy Spirit, operating on the hearts of men, the Church has continued, and shall continue to flourish, until it embrace all nations; until all shall be converted, not in outward profession only, but in truth and spirit; until all shall be truly united unto Christ, by the renewal of the heart, in righteousness, and holiness of life; until with all, old things shall be done away, and all things become new:‖ until the image of God, in which man was created, be restored in all men. Then shall commence the latter day glory, when all shall “hold the faith in unity of spirit, and in the bond of peace;” when, in the animated language of prophecy, *the wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid.—And they shall not hurt, nor destroy, in all God’s holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.*§

To this glorious state, the transpiring events of a changing world are hastening the Church. Let no one then be shaken in his faith, but hold fast his profession unto the end. Under such a view as we have taken of the perpetuity of the Church, and its Ministry, we have abundant cause for exultation and triumph. For although our earthly head is removed from us, yet are we sure that the great Head over all, remaineth in heaven, and will do his pleasure; will take care of his flock, who put their trust in him, and remain steadfast in their faith. As men, we are, by this providence, reminded of our own mortality, and urged to prepare for our departure from this militant state, to that which is triumphant: but as members of the Church, our

\* Eph. i. 10.

† Tit. ii. 14.

‡ 2 Tim. ii. 19.

§ 2 Cor. v. 17.

§ Isaiah xi. 6, 9.





minds should be led to a wider view of God's ways, in his kingdom of grace; that we may be confirmed and built up in our holy faith; and thus bring forth its fruits, in unity and love unfeigned.

Here I might conclude, were it not that respect for the memory of our deceased Diocesan, and the office he sustained, require, on the present occasion, some notice of his personal character.

In common instances of mortality, such notices may justly be suspected of flattery to the living. But when we consider that he, who is to be our present subject, held the highest office in the Church, and was authorised, according to divine appointment, to ordain and send labourers into the Vineyard of Christ, it would betray a censurable disregard of propriety, not to commemorate his virtues. On the contrary, that, wherein he was worthy of imitation, should be noticed, in order that, being dead, he may yet speak, and instruct the flock, over which he presided.

The life of a clergyman is, ordinarily, too tranquil and uniform, to afford incidents sufficiently interesting for historical remark. But were it otherwise, want of authentic documents, relative to the Bishop's early life, preclude my undertaking the task. And during the time he held the responsible office, to which he was invited by the votes of his brethren, to much the greater part of my hearers, his history is well known. Suffice it, then, that I attempt a sketch of his character.

To those who were intimately acquainted with BISHOP JARVIS, it is well known, he possessed a good share of common human science, acquired in his youth; to which he added, what was of more importance in his station, as a Minister of Christ, a copious fund of theological knowledge. Few eminent divines of the Church of England, who lived and wrote in the last and preceding centuries, escaped his reading. He read them, not as matter of amusement, but he thoroughly studied, and digested their matter. In such a school, he was deeply impressed with all the great and fundamental Doctrines of Divine Truth—

the fall and original corruption of man—his consequent need of a Saviour, and the operations of divine grace, to revive the image of God in the soul, and quicken the spiritual life, were, with him, first principles in Christian theology. To these he added a Trinity of persons in the Godhead, and the divine institution of the Church, its Ministers and Ordinances, as means of grace. These he firmly believed were the doctrines of the Bible, of primitive Christianity, and of the early reformers.

Thus settled in his faith, he listened not to novelties. He believed that whatever was new in Divinity, was, for that very reason, false. To improvements in human science, he was a friend: while he believed that God had long since revealed every thing necessary for man to know, believe, and do, in order to obtain salvation. Hence, nothing new was to be expected in theology. This rendered him an undeviating advocate for primitive usage and discipline in the Church. This he was, to such a degree, as to be thought by some, too unyielding, too little disposed to accommodate the feelings of others. But those who knew him well, were convinced, it was the pure effect of principle, and a sense of duty. He well knew the pernicious consequences of needless innovation, and the imposing air with which novelty too often captivates the unwary; and therefore wished to meet them in the threshold, and shut them out of the Church.

The truth was, he deliberated long and thoroughly, before he formed opinions; and when they were formed, they became principles of action, and were not readily changed. This is a trait of character, that is of great worth, in the present state of the world, when innovations in civil polity are attempting to make their way into the Church of God. At such a time, persevering decision of character is of eminent use, to preserve order and regularity, and hence peace on earth, and good will to men. Such, in the fullest sense of the word, was the character of Bishop Jarvis. His object, when settled, was ever in view. It was steadily pursued in his conduct. Convinced of its worth and

importance, and trusting in the wisdom of Providence, he ever went on, undismayed by difficulties and obstructions that might come in his way.

He entertained a becoming sense of the dignity of the clerical character, and studied to promote it, in his words, in his actions, and in the measures he proposed and followed. He was indignant at meanness; at any thing which might lower the sacred office, in the view of the world. As the ambassadors of the most high God, it was his sentiment, that they should respect themselves; and so conduct, that they might command the respect of others.

As a man, his talents were rather solid than showy. His discourses in the pulpit were marked by good sense and sound divinity, rather than fine conceits, or tricks of rhetoric. And as was his manner, so his manner of delivery—always grave, solemn, earnest, and frequently impressive, in a high degree. In proof of this, permit me to cite his address delivered to this body, at its last meeting. "As it hath pleased God "to continue my life to a considerable length, beyond "that of my predecessor, that single reflection is an "ample monitor to me, to look forward to an approaching period, which, as it respects myself, to human "view, cannot be far distant. Under such impressions, I must be sensible of increasing uncertainty "of meeting you hereafter, in your future conventions."

The venerable appearance, the grave and solemn manner, in which these reflections were delivered, cannot be remembered; and I trust, long will be remembered, by all who were present; especially our clerical brethren. They contain a specimen of that *sound speech, which cannot be condemned*.\* And it hath pleased God, that they should be prophetic. He has never had another opportunity of meeting the convention.

Though the Bishop, according to the direction of an Apostle, in doctrine, showed *uncorruptness, gravity,*





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and sincerity,† both in public and private, in the Church, and in the friendly circle; yet was he affable, polite, and ready to converse on common topics, according to his company, and suited to occasions.—We, my brethren of the clergy, can witness, that he was always fond of seeing us at his house; that we were there hospitably entertained. Few men enjoyed society more than he. His hours were distributed, as we well know, between domestic concerns, conversation, study, and acts of piety. Fond of the family circle, formal visits were unfrequent. Correct in matters of economy, he was domestic in his manners. He was resigned to the will of Providence; patient under afflictions, of which he had his share in life; nor too much elated by prosperity; always preserving a well tempered equanimity. In fine, as a clergyman, he was correct in his sentiments; as a member of society, a well wisher to its order and peace. A tender husband, and an affectionate parent. Thus he lived, and at length, in a good old age, he has gone to that world, from whence none return.

May we, then, preserve his memory in our minds, cherish his virtues in our hearts, and imitate them in our lives. May the Spirit of truth, the Holy Ghost the Comforter, sanctify all our affections, preside in our councils, and, in due time, direct our choice to a suitable character, to fill the sacred office. May unanimity and harmony prevail, that this Church may be reorganized, and built up, in purity of faith, in holiness of conversation, and ever remain an ornament to the Church universal.

† Tit. ii. 7.



RIGHT REVEREND ABRAHAM JARVIS, D.D., LL.D.  
Second Bishop of Connecticut.  
Consecrated Trinity Church, New Haven, Sept. 18, 1797.

From a water color painted by his son, Rev. Samuel F. Jarvis, D.D. Owned by his grandson,  
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